Editorial

Journal name change to *Sexually Transmitted Infections*

Names are emotive and changing them is traumatic, not least because of the inevitable disruptions. I have already alluded to the reasons for reluctantly accepting this disruption.¹ There were two main considerations.

Firstly, despite the passage of 11 years since the first name change from *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* our present name remains incomprehensible, or at best misunderstood, by most of our potential readers and contributors outside the British Isles. Currently two thirds of our subscribers are from North America, continental Europe, the Far East, and Africa, pointing to the enormous potential in expanding readership in these zones. If the aim of a journal is to broaden readership and contributors as much as possible, then all possible obstacles to that expansion must be removed. Secondly, in this age of the Internet, it is vital to have a name that would be recognised by the various search engines in use. Most people looking for the kind of information published in *Genitourinary Medicine* would key in either "sexually transmitted" or "HIV/AIDS".

At the last editorial board meeting there was overwhelming support for a name change, unanimous in the

case of our non-UK editors. What name to choose was more problematic. A number of options were rejected. Names beginning with *British* would be too parochial, those preceded by *Journal* would have dissolved it among the crowd of "journals" and those revolving round *Sexual Health* are likely to be as confusing to the non-British readership as *Genitourinary Medicine*. Despite some earnest pleadings we felt we could not revert to variations on *Venereology*.

A ballot of the editorial board members and members of the Council of the MSSVD came up with a tie between the two alternatives of *Sexually Transmitted Infections* with or without the addition of *HIV*. We have chosen to call the journal *Sexually Transmitted Infections* because it is direct, succinct, and describes most of what we print. We will incorporate "HIV" on the cover in some form. The change will come with volume 74 in 1998. We will need the interval to prepare subscribers and librarians for the change.

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Editor

1 Shahmanesh M. On a new road. *Genitourin Med* 1996;72:81-2.