

# Report of the Editors—2009

**Co-Editors: Thomas A. Louis**

**Geert Molenberghs (retired in 2009)**

**Geert Verbeke**

**David Zucker**

**Executive Editor: Marie Davidian**

*Biometrics*, a journal of the International Biometric Society (IBS), is one of the top scholarly publications reporting work promoting the use of statistical and mathematical theory and methods in the biosciences. Papers in *Biometrics* are authored by top researchers in the statistical profession. The journal website, <http://www.biometrics.tibs.org/>, presents information about the journal, including detailed instructions for authors, new developments, and review time statistics (updated monthly). The newsletter of the IBS, the *Biometric Bulletin*, features in each issue a column reporting on *Biometrics*-related news.

## Changes to the Editorial Board

Co-Editor Geert Molenberghs completed his term on December 31, 2009. We thank Geert for his excellent service to the journal. We are pleased to welcome Geert's successor (also named Geert), Geert Verbeke, who started his three-year term on January 1, 2010. The Editorial Board currently comprises 97 Associate Editors, who collectively represent expertise across a broad range of methodological specialties and application areas. In 2009, 16 Associate Editors retired or resigned, and 15 new Associate Editors joined the board. We thank all of our current and former Associate Editors for their dedicated and outstanding service to the journal. We also recognize and extend our gratitude to the numerous referees who have been willing to devote their time and expertise to our peer review process. The names of all referees serving during 2009 were published in the December 2009 issue.

We are grateful for the consistently unparalleled service of our outstanding Editorial Manager, Ms. Ann Hanhart. We are extremely fortunate to have in our service such a skilled, organized, and dedicated individual. Without Ms. Hanhart, *Biometrics* would not be the successful and efficient publication it is today. And we welcome Ms. Hanhart's Editorial Assistant, Ms. Fran Smith, who assumed her position in mid-2009 with responsibilities to help with day-to-day journal operations.

The position of Liaison Editor is an internal, rotating position held by one of the Co-Editors, carrying responsibilities for handling day-to-day manuscript processing issues and for taking the lead on scientific initiatives. Co-Editor David Zucker

was Liaison Editor in 2009 and is succeeded by Co-Editor Tom Louis for 2010.

## Submission and Acceptance Statistics

In 2009, 615 new manuscripts were submitted to the Biometric Methodology and Biometric Practice sections, an increase over the 591 received in 2008. The journal also received three new submissions of Letters to the Editors and seven Reader Reaction articles.

The 615 new manuscript submissions came from 38 countries/districts. The greatest proportion of submissions was from the USA (53.2%), followed by Canada (6.3%), the United Kingdom (5.4%), P. R. China (5.0%), Taiwan (2.8%), France (2.6%), Australia and Japan (2.4% each), and Singapore (2.3%). Each of the remaining countries/districts contributed less than 2% of the total new submissions. Table 1 shows the distribution of 2009 new manuscript submissions by geographic region.

Table 2 shows the first review status and the current review status (as of January 6, 2010, the date on which this report was prepared) of 2008 and 2009 new manuscript submissions, respectively. In 2009, 23% of new manuscripts were rejected by the Co-Editors without external review, lower than the 27% rejection rate in 2008 and similar to the 21% rate in 2007. The overall acceptance rate continues to be around 26%.

Of the seven Reader Reaction papers submitted in 2009, one is still under review, three were rejected, and three were accepted. Of the three Letters to the Editors, one was rejected, one was accepted, and one is still under review.

In 2009, *Biometrics* published one Discussion paper, appearing in the Biometric Methodology Section; one Presidential Address paper; 103 additional Biometric Methodology papers, 32 Biometric Practice papers, no Reader Reaction papers, and one Letter to the Editor.

## Review Times

In 2009, *Biometrics* maintained the tradition of timely, high-quality reviews that sets the standard for journals in the statistics profession. Our swift review times are a consequence of the dedication of our Associate Editors and referees. Table 3 shows major percentiles of review times for first submissions and for first revisions for 2008 and 2009, where review time

**Table 1**

*Distribution of 2009 new manuscript submissions (n = 615)  
by geographical region*

Region	Frequency	Percent
Africa	4	0.65
Asia	94	15.28
Europe	126	20.49
Latin America and the Caribbean	8	1.30
North America	366	59.51
Oceania	17	2.76

is defined as the time period between the date when a manuscript was received by the journal and the date when a letter and reports were sent to the author(s). Results are presented for all submissions and for manuscripts that were sent out for external review by the Co-Editor, where manuscripts of the latter type exclude those rejected or accepted by the Co-Editors without being sent to an Associate Editor. Each line of the table is derived from Kaplan–Meier estimates of survival curves for time to review, treating manuscripts

for which reviews are pending as noninformatively censored.

From the table, the median review time in 2009 for all first submissions was 1.8 months, and the 75th and 95th percentiles were 2.4 and 3.1, respectively. These figures are almost the same as those for 2008. The median time to first review for all revisions was 1.7 months, which is slightly longer than the 1.4 months achieved in 2008; 75th and 95th percentiles were 2.1 and 3.0 months, respectively, which are about the same as the 2.0 and 3.0 months in 2008. No paper experienced a review time of any kind of over 5.0 months in 2008 or 2009. Kaplan–Meier survival curves corresponding to the 2009 results are presented in Figure 1 and show the comparison with the 2008 figures. Overall, review times in 2009 are similar to those in 2008, with perhaps a slight degradation of those for revisions.

The number of journal pages allotted in 2009 was 1376, the same number as in 2008. The journal continues to experience a rather long backlog (defined as the time between acceptance and appearance of an article in the *print* version of *Biometrics*). Backlogs for 2009 have stayed at 12–14 months, the same as those in 2008. We continue to take steps toward

**Table 2**

*Review status of new submissions in 2008 and 2009*

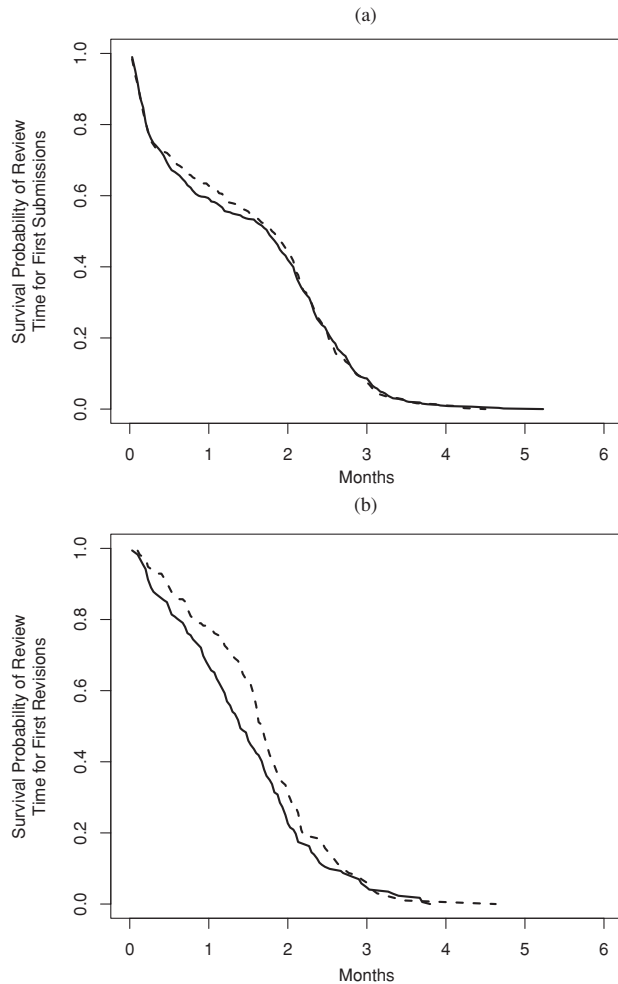
Year	Status	First review		Current*	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
2008 (n = 591)	Rejected w/o external reviews	160	27.1	160	27.1
	Rejected w/ external reviews	260	44.0	280	47.4
	Revision allowed at own risk	71	12.0	19	3.2
	Revision invited	100	16.9	12	2.0
	Accepted	0	0.0	117	19.8
	First submission under review	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Revision under review	–	–	3	0.5
2009 (n = 615)	Rejected w/o external reviews	142	23.1	142	23.1
	Rejected w/ external reviews	247	40.2	253	41.1
	Revision allowed at own risk	80	13.0	46	7.5
	Revision invited	73	11.9	42	6.8
	Accepted	0	0.0	32	5.2
	First submission under review	73	11.9	73	11.9
	Revision under review	–	–	27	4.4

\*As of January 6, 2010, the date on which this report was prepared.

**Table 3**

*Summary statistics for manuscript review times in 2008 and 2009*

Year	Submission type	MS type	n	Percentiles of review time in months					
				Min	25th	50th	75th	95th	Max
2008	First submission	All	591	0.0	0.3	1.8	2.4	3.2	4.7
		Reviewed externally	431	0.0	1.2	2.1	2.6	3.3	4.7
	First revision	All	172	0.0	0.8	1.4	2.0	3.0	3.8
		Reviewed externally	155	0.0	0.9	1.5	2.0	3.0	3.8
2009	First submission	All	615	0.0	0.3	1.8	2.4	3.1	4.5
		Reviewed externally	473	0.0	1.3	2.1	2.5	3.2	4.5
	First revision	All	155	0.0	1.1	1.7	2.1	3.0	4.6
		Reviewed externally	139	0.0	1.3	1.7	2.2	3.1	4.6



**Figure 1.** Kaplan–Meier survival curve estimates of the review times in months for (a) first submissions and (b) first revisions: 2008 – solid line; 2009 – dashed line.

shortening the backlog, including diligent attention to the length of accepted manuscripts, and we have authors make liberal use of the Supplementary Materials feature. For 2010, the journal has been allotted the same number of pages as in 2009 (namely, 1376), so that, given the volume of high-quality submissions to the journal, we do not expect backlogs to decline. The Early View feature provided by our publisher ensures that accepted papers are published electronically in their final, typeset form within 8 weeks of being sent to the publisher (provided authors return proofs within 48 hours) at the *Biometrics* website at Wiley-Blackwell (<http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0006-341X>) and are assigned a digital object identifier (DOI) so that they may be formally cited. Information on how to cite Early View articles using the DOI number can be found at the journal website (<http://www.biometrics.tibs.org/>) under the **Information for Authors** link.

### ***Biometrics* Sessions at Leading Statistical Conferences**

The *Biometrics* Co-Editors organized an invited paper session at one leading statistical conference in 2009. The session, featuring accepted or published *Biometrics* papers whose authors have links to countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) of IBS, took place in May 2009 at the 5th EMR-IBS Conference in Istanbul, Turkey. The session, chaired by Co-Editor Geert Molenberghs, featured the following presentations: “Covariate Adjusted Correlation Analysis with Application to FMR1,” by D. Senturk; “Improving Efficiency of Inferences in Randomized Clinical Trials Using Auxiliary Covariates,” by A. Tsiatis; and “Analyzing Spatially Distributed Binary Data Using Independent Block Estimating Equations,” by S. D. Oman.

*Biometrics* Editor Invited Sessions are planned for the Joint Statistical Meetings, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, August 2010; and for the International Biometric Conference, Florianópolis-SC, Brazil, December 2010.