

Publishing in *BAM* is an Act of Benevolence, Vanity, Stupidity or Just Good Science: Reflections of a *BAM* Supporter

Mike Dodson

Muscle Biology Laboratory; Department of Animal Sciences Washington State University

Abstract

Those scientists, or “Friends of *BAM*” as the Editor calls those that publish papers in *BAM*, have weathered quite a long period of uncertainty with respect to the journal becoming “accepted” by peer scientists and informational dispersal agencies such as MEDLINE, AGRICOLA or Web of Science (new form of *Current Contents*). This small paper is intended to share one supporter’s experience with his interaction\affiliation with *BAM*.

Basic Applied Myol 14(2): 95-96, 2004

Over the course of the past twenty years I have tried to publish papers in journals, the audience of which I believed would benefit from my papers. *Basic and Applied Myology (BAM)* was one of these journals. My first paper in *BAM* was actually an offering from work performed by one of my doctoral students, dealing with the possibility of satellite cell subpopulations residing in the skeletal muscle of sheep [9]. Since that time, I have published numerous articles in *BAM*, including data papers [9-13], review papers [2,8], teaching papers [5], and perspectives papers [3,6,7]. I have also helped organize specific journal issues dealing with topics like introducing the myology field to the satellite cell research being conducted in the agricultural science arena [1], and collating an important issue dealing with the topic: intercellular communication and muscle biology [4]. This interaction with *BAM* places me, as well as many other scientists that have done like-wise, in a unique position to evaluate the impact of *BAM* on muscle research, as well as the impact of interacting with *BAM* on one’s career.

As informed by the Editor on numerous occasions, through public editorials and through private (personal) communications, *BAM* has literally been “through the mill”. For years we solicited the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) to allow *BAM* to be placed into *Current Contents*, and each year there was something else that the journal needed to work on prior to be accepted by ISI. *BAM* actually made in into *Current Contents* for nearly two years, then was dropped due to a relatively low impact factor, the fact that few libraries possessed a subscription to *BAM*, and that publication dynamics were slow with papers being of low impact status. Interestingly, during this same time period, numerous journals were changing their entire focus

towards molecular biology and were neglecting the very same area of muscle research that *BAM* was trying to fill. To his credit the editor of *BAM* kept promoting the journal to the best of his ability and kept publishing papers with a focus towards an applied basis. Papers\issues dealing with the surgical correction of cardiomyopathy, via dynamic cardiomyoplasty, were invaluable to medical personnel working in cardiology, and focused issues dealing with broad subjects like fish muscle growth and development have personally been invaluable to me and my collaborators (just to cite a few examples of the applied research found in *BAM* over the years).

Will *BAM* ever find its place besides other muscle journals, and eventually get the professional respect that it desires? Likely not--unless a couple of important things happen. First, *BAM* needs to donate subscriptions of the journal to scientific libraries in the Unites States and other countries. I view this initial expense as an investment. Let us face it, if no one can see the journal because it is not on the library shelf for scientists to use--it is of little value and (basically) becomes a vanity press for one’s papers. Donating subscriptions would provide the exposure required to increase the impact factor of the journal, as well. In this same vein, I suggest that representatives of *BAM* formally participate in the commercial exhibits found at most scientific meetings (like American Society of Cell Biology meetings). Setting-up a formal booth and promoting the journal must be done in order to re-acquaint the scientific community with the new effort by *BAM* to become a mainstream journal. Second, *BAM* needs to (perhaps) affiliate itself with scientific societies, perhaps as the official journal of the society. Third, *BAM* must only accept papers that are of high quality, even if obtaining

Publishing in *BAM*

such papers requires an invitation from the editor to specific individuals in the field. Fourth, papers that are submitted to *BAM* need to have a rapid turn-around time so that *BAM* does not become a repository journal like many of its elderly relatives. Should *BAM* be serious about becoming a tier-one journal, how long would such a conversion take to complete. I suspect that it would take less than five years to make *BAM* accepted as a stately muscle journal.

What about the scientists that have supported *BAM* for all these years? I can tell you that publishing in *BAM* took a toll on my professional advancement. When being considered for advancement to Associate Professor I heard numerous negative comments about my support for the fledgling journal. When being considered for promotion to Professor, I was actually turned-down the first time due to my affiliation with *BAM*. As *BAM* was not in the libraries in the United States, and was not in *Current Contents*, publication in *BAM* was considered by my promotions committee as the same as publishing in a popular press magazine. I suppose that many other supporters of *BAM* had similar experiences. Even with the adversity, however, I wonder how many scientists are still *BAM* supporters (or “Friends”)? I suspect many are.

Why would someone keep supporting a journal that is not on the same level as *Developmental Biology*, *Science*, *Nature*, *Experimental Cell Research* or *Muscle and Nerve*? Is supporting *BAM* an act of benevolence, vanity or stupidity? It is my belief that it is none of these, but rather simply “good science”. Scientists are not all formed in the same mold. Not all scientists desire world fame. It is my belief that some scientists actually want to do “what is right”. What is right with respect to *BAM* is to first push the journal “over the edge”, and get it (finally) established in libraries and in the minds of scientific societies.... regardless of the cost (remember - this is an investment). Second, publish high quality papers (which will happen especially if the journal is known to exist). Finally, re-submit for acceptance by the information dispersal agencies (MEDLINE, etc). Should these items be made a reality, muscle researchers around the world will support *BAM*. Take it from a *BAM* supporter (“Friend”), the journal is worth the effort! I can only hope that I never will write another perspectives paper like this one. Perhaps the next one will be to reflect on the world-wide support that *BAM* will have achieved in the years to come. Go get them, Ugo!!

Address correspondence to:

Dodson M.V.; Muscle Biology Laboratory;
Department of Animal Sciences; Washington State
University; Pullman, WA 99164-6351.

References

- [1] Dodson, M.V. 1995. Satellite Cell Regulation in Agriculturally Important Animals. *Basic Appl Myol* 5(1):4-86.
- [2] Dodson, M. V., D.C. McFarland, E. Bandman, W. Dayton, Z. Yablonka-Reuveni, E. Greene, M. Doumit, W. Bergen, R. Merkel, J. Vierck, S. Velleman and J. Koumans. 1995. Status of satellite cell research in agriculture. *Basic Appl Myol* 5(1):5-11.
- [3] Dodson, M. V. 1995. At the funding crossroads: A call for international collaboration in basic and applied myology. *Basic Appl Myol* 5(4):375-376.
- [4] Dodson, M.V. and U. Carraro 1996. Cell to Cell Communication in Muscle Development. *Basic Appl Myol* 6(6):396-510.
- [5] Dodson, M.V., E.A. Krabbenhoft, B.A. O'Reilly and J.L. Vierck. 1997. Independent studies by undergraduate students: An alternative way to advance research in basic and applied myology. *Basic Appl Myol* 7(2):145-147.
- [6] Dodson, M.V., Z. Yablonka-Reuveni, E. Bandman and M. Grounds. 1997. *Basic and Applied Myology*: A reflection of our roots and vision for the immediate future. *Basic Appl Myol* 7(3&4):295-298.
- [7] Dodson, M.V. 2000. Are we making progress in defining the role and regulation of myogenic satellite cells? *Basic Appl Myol* 10(4):201-202.
- [8] Duckett, S.K., K.M. Byrne, K.L. Hossner and M.V. Dodson. 1998. Farm animal models applicable for cellular and molecular skeletal muscle growth research. *Basic Appl Myol* 8(1):165-170.
- [9] Molnar, G.R. and M.V. Dodson. 1992. Characterization of ovine semimembranosus muscle and associated satellite cells: Expression of fast and slow myosin heavy chain isoforms. *Basic Appl Myol* 2(3):183-190.
- [10] Molnar, G.R. and M.V. Dodson. 1993. Satellite cells isolated from sheep skeletal muscle are heterogeneous. *Basic Appl Myol* 3(3):173-180.
- [11] Venkateswaran, V., E.J. Brackett, J. Cloud and M.V. Dodson. 1995. Substratum is an important determinant in growth factor regulation of trout-derived satellite cells. *Basic Appl Myol* 5(3):297-304.
- [12] Vierck, J., J. McNamara, K. Hossner and M.V. Dodson. 1995. Characterization of ovine skeletal muscle satellite cell strains in a defined culture medium formulated to enhance differentiation: fusion and the IGF-I system. *Basic Appl Myol* 5(1):12-21.
- [13] Vierck, J.L., D. Dal Porto and M.V. Dodson. 2001. Induction of preadipocyte differentiation by a defined treatment medium without DMI. *Basic Appl Myol* 11:99-104.