

EDITORIAL



Physiology and Biochemistry

Ian Macdonald retires as Editor-In-Chief

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Dr. Ian Macdonald stepped down as Editor-In-Chief for the *International Journal of Obesity* (IJO) in June 2021 after 22 years of distinguished service (1999–2021). Together with Dr. Richard (Dick) L. Atkinson (who retired as Editor-In-Chief in December 2020 [1]) Ian led IJO through a period of unprecedented growth. In 1999 the journal received 324 submissions and published 265 manuscripts. By 2020 submissions and publications were 1461 and 216 respectively. Here we provide a brief tribute to Dr. Macdonald's academic career, leadership and ongoing contributions to nutrition and obesity research.

Dr. Ian Macdonald is emeritus Professor of Metabolic Physiology at the University of Nottingham and former Head of the School of Life Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Nottingham. His research addresses the functional consequences of metabolic and nutritional disturbances in health and disease, with specific interests in obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and exercise. Ian's early work involved assessing the physiological consequences (mainly on thermoregulation and blood pressure regulation) of metabolic and nutritional disturbances such as starvation, hypoglycaemia, and prolonged exercise. His more recent work has focused on the metabolic aspects of diabetes and obesity, including the effects of diet composition and weight loss, and the impact of dietary supplements on carbohydrate and lipid metabolism. Two areas of very recent interest relate to the use of magnetic resonance imaging and spectroscopy for assessing alterations in metabolism and the influence of nutrients and metabolic disturbances on gene expression in adipose tissue and muscle.

Ian has published over 400 peer-reviewed original research papers, together with reviews, book chapters and invited contributions. One of Ian's most significant contributions to the field of obesity research has been to recognise that physical inactivity is much more important than initially thought in terms of contributing to conditions such as insulin resistance and inflammation. Ian has been prominent among the research community in highlighting that physical inactivity is a real problem and a big challenge for society not just because of its link with obesity but because it contributes to people losing their independence and mobility, and in so doing leads to unhealthy ageing. An aspect that has exemplified Ian's approach to research has been his focus on integrated human physiology and nutrition. Whilst recognising the importance of molecular and genetic research Ian continues to advocate for whole organism research which includes functional measurements in people.

Aside from his position at the University of Nottingham (where he worked for over 43 years), and his distinguished research career Ian has many other roles and notable achievements. He has sat on

external advisory committees for the government and for the food industry, where he tried to ensure that high-quality science was considered and conducted. He was involved in the UK government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) for 13 years and chaired the Working Group on Carbohydrates and Health. He is a Fellow of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences, a Fellow of the Society of Biology, a Fellow of the Physiological Society, a Registered Nutritionist, and an Honorary Fellow of the Association for Nutrition.

Below are some brief professional and personal perspectives of current and previous IJO editors who worked closely with Dr. Macdonald during his years as Editor-in-Chief for IJO.

Dr. Richard L Atkinson

Ian Macdonald is retiring as Editor of IJO as the longest serving Editor in its history. He and I were Co-Editors during my 21 years of service and during that time I appreciated his vast store of knowledge about obesity, nutrition, and physiology. I certainly was a bit intimidated by Ian when I first started because of his editorial seniority, the large number of publications he had and was continuing to have each year, and because he always seemed to know more about a topic than I did. His strong British accent added at least 10 IQ points to his intelligence. His quick wit, and sometimes sarcasm, were daunting until I figured out that he had trouble spelling. He kept writing extra letters in words like haematology, behaviour, humour, etc and he couldn't get the order of the e and r letters in words like centre, theatre, etc. He has a great sense of humour so we had a good time sparring over various topics, including American and British politicians, foreign affairs, Brexit, and the merits of baseball over cricket. He continued to insist that football was played with a round ball and, despite all evidence to the contrary, that the British Health System was superior to the American. Ian is a fanatic golfer and I heard many stories over the years about playing in the rain, playing in the winter with three coats and thick gloves on, and how on a few occasions he had whipped his colleagues in the numerous golf matches in which he participated. I had the pleasure of playing at his home course in Nottingham a couple of times, which led to some interesting experiences. He introduced me to a quite large red deer who followed me along the course and into a sand trap when I had an unfortunate shot. He insisted that the deer was looking for a mate and thought I was attractive. The most distressing thing for Ian about playing golf together was that, although I am some years his senior in age, I often outdrove him—using borrowed clubs at that. He kept muttering about off days, the need to get to the driving range to practice, and other excuses. I have invited him to visit me in Florida some winter where he won't have the hindrances of coats and gloves, and perhaps he can redeem himself.

In all seriousness, Ian is one of the brightest and most competent scientists with whom I have had the pleasure of working. He always had great comments and advice about the

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workings of the journal and my harebrained schemes to increase manuscript submission rates and the journal's reach. I was very sorry to retire and cease working almost daily with him on IJO matters. Now that he has stepped down, the field of obesity is poorer without his contributions. I wish him a long and happy retirement, with only rare golf balls in the woods and water.

Dr. Nik Dhurandhar

It was Dr. Macdonald, whom I first met through journal articles, and eventually came to know as 'Ian'. Imagine my delight and anxiety, when I was a postdoctoral fellow and Dr. Macdonald sat next to me for a talk during a conference. All I could think was how could I take advantage of this coincidence and introduce myself to him. I wanted to say something witty so that he would think well of me. But I knew he had 150+ publications (at the time). How could I possibly say anything that would interest him, let alone impress. And the miracle happened. After the talk, he turned to me and asked, what I thought about ghrelin—the subject of that talk. I don't remember what I said in my stupor, but either out of pity or empathy, he continues to interact with me to date.

I was so wrong about being intimidated by Ian, one of the most approachable and unassuming researchers I know. Over the years my interactions with him have revealed so many wonderful facets of his personality. In addition to his self-evident brilliance and contribution to science, I have always been impressed about how thoughtful, thorough, and careful this understated scientist is. I hope that he will not notice me say that his articulation of viewpoints is so persuasive, that at times I have been tempted to go along, even when I disagreed on rare occasions. Cricket is a frequent topic of our exchange, and he was so measured in delivering stinging comments when describing a recent win of UK over India, our respective home countries.




The International Journal of Obesity has benefited from Ian's even-keeled temperament and balanced world-view and I have learned a thing or two from him that has helped me in my role with the journal. The world of nutrition and obesity research has gained much from Ian's contribution, and I look forward to much more to come from him in various ways.

Dr. David J Stensel

Ian invited me to become an Associate Editor for IJO in 2013 and I served in this role for over 8 years. When Ian retired from his Editor-In-Chief role in June 2021 I was honoured (and a little apprehensive) to be invited to fill his shoes and in July 2021 I began working in partnership with Dr. Nik Dhurandhar as joint Editor-In-Chief for IJO. Whilst I am still on a steep learning curve, I would not have been sufficiently experienced to undertake my new role had it not been for the guidance and mentorship Ian provided throughout my tenure as Associate Editor. Due to the success of IJO under Ian's leadership, over 1200 manuscripts are now submitted each year. It is challenging ensuring each manuscript is reviewed in a timely, professional, and comprehensive manner. This responsibility rests initially with the Editors-In-Chief and Associate Editors who together evaluate the suitability of each manuscript for external peer review. From the very beginning I was impressed by Ian's speed and insight when

assessing manuscripts. To me it appeared he had only taken a cursory glance at each manuscript but after discussion it was clear he had absorbed key facts and details allowing him to effectively assess the strengths and limitations of the work and its suitability for further detailed review and publication. Such insight and mentorship have been invaluable now that I am evaluating many more manuscripts than I did as an Associate Editor.

I have very fond memories of working with Ian for over 8 years. His cheerful disposition made me feel welcome right from the start. Always swift to respond to e-mail queries about manuscripts and always thoughtful and helpful when responding—it has been a pleasure working with Ian. A notable highlight has been attending the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) meetings in various European cities, during which IJO editorial board meetings were held followed by post-board meals where Ian (and Dick) would regale board members with entertaining stories relating not only to nutrition and obesity research but broader areas including sport, politics, and current affairs. The conversations were always stimulating and vibrant and I particularly enjoyed the good-natured UK vs US banter which typified interactions between Dick and Ian. I will miss these occasions and I will strive to maintain the lofty editorial standards Ian has set now that I am in his shoes. I look forward to future interactions with Ian and I wish him a very long and happy (semi) retirement. I know that he will keep himself fit and healthy through cycling, golf and walking with his wife and their Labrador.

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1. Dhurandhar NV, Whigham LD, Macdonald I, Richard L, Atkinson MD. FTOS, retires as Editor-In-Chief. *Int J Obes.* 2021;45:461–3.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing interests.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to D. J. Stensel.

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