When I began my 2-year term as Chairman of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research (1975–1977), I was looking for some special project. The Freis-V.A. studies had appeared in 1969 and 1970 and proved beyond a doubt that the drug treatment of hypertension saved lives and prevented strokes and congestive heart failure. Drug companies were responding to this by developing new drugs such as beta-blockers. Experts in treating hypertension were emerging rapidly. The renin story in clinical medicine was growing. The entire field of high blood pressure was expanding at a fast clip. The whole situation cried out for a new journal dedicated to the general area of hypertension. It would be the first in the world.

The idea was broached informally and met some stiff resistance. These nay-sayers averred that Circulation, Circulation Research, the American Journal of Physiology, etc. could easily handle the hypertension papers. It was obvious that founding a new journal was not going to be easy, but these opponents could not feel the new, tremendous growth of the high blood pressure field.

So, the attempt was going to be made, regardless of the adverse opinions.

Stratagem A.
Such a journal could not succeed if it could not attract advertising revenues. I contacted 10 drug companies and got commitments for advertising funds for the first 2 years of a hypertension journal.

Stratagem B.
Hands down, the best publisher of such a journal would be the American Heart Association (AHA). They already had the excellent peer-reviewed journals, Circulation, Circulation Research, and Stroke. They also had relatively deep pockets, were committed to excellence, and were nonprofit.

Stratagem C.
The creation of a new journal in the AHA hierarchy requires the positive recommendation of the Publication Committee. I called the AHA and received a list of all the committee members. I knew personally about 75% of the people on the committee. I telephoned each one of these about 2 weeks before the “big” committee meeting and explained why it would be a great thing if the AHA sponsored the first journal in the world devoted to hypertension. I described the strong emergence of the field. What is more, each person I called promised that he or she would back the project.

Lucky Break
The Chairman of the Publication Committee was strongly opposed to the creation of this new journal. Luckily, he opened the committee meeting in Dallas and dealt with sundry publication problems. Then he said that he had to leave for some other AHA business and would not be back that whole morning. Finally, our project appeared on the agenda. I stood up there, “heart in throat,” and gave my best argument for the creation of the new journal. I mentioned our advertising commitments and even presented a projected financial balance sheet. Arthur Guyton got up and gave a ringing endorsement of the new journal. Jay Coffman did likewise, along with several others. And the Chairman was not there to rain on our parade; so mirabile dictu, a vote was taken and the committee voted strongly in favor of the new journal.

Trial by Fire
The victory at the Publication Committee was nice and even necessary as a preliminary hurdle. However, the 10-person Steering Committee of the AHA makes all the big decisions. It was then chaired by John Shepherd, President of the AHA. As my presentation came closer and closer on the agenda, I was mentally picturing the ecclesiastical juries of the Inquisition. Well, my time came and I gave it my best shot. At least 2 members were strongly against it. At this point, Harriet Dustan stood up and gave a rousing speech in favor of the journal. Ultimately, the vote was taken and it was a tie. At this point, our great friend, John Shepherd, cast the deciding vote in favor of the journal. We were launched.

A Small Fly in the Ointment
We proposed that the new journal should come out monthly, just as most prominent journals do. This would enhance reader acceptance. But since the vote was so close, there was obvious doubt by some that the journal would succeed. These doubters insisted that the new journal should come out every 2 months. This was a compromise we had to accept, knowing full well that it would ultimately be a monthly publication.

So it came to pass, the world’s first (and best) hypertension journal made its appearance.
Story of the Birth of the Journal Called Hypertension
Louis Tobian

Hypertension. 1999;33:7
doi: 10.1161/01.HYP.33.1.7
Hypertension is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231
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Print ISSN: 0194-911X. Online ISSN: 1524-4563

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:
http://hyper.ahajournals.org/content/33/1/7

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