

## In This Issue

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As JDME enters its fifth year of publication, I would like to take a moment to thank the journal's readers, contributors, and editorial team, without whom it would cease to exist. Thank you. Also, we would like to welcome new associate editor Margaret Richardson.

In this first issue of 2008, Michael Scriven provides an editorial on cost analysis in evaluation where he laments the continued lack of use of cost analysis in evaluation, and then suggests that this is not a good reason to give the job to economists, because of what he christens 'the economist's fallacy'—an invalid definition of cost (explained in a later paper in this issue). Next, Michael Patton argues for treating advocacy evaluation as a special type of evaluation and presents an impact evaluation of an advocacy campaign that was intended to influence an important Supreme Court ruling. An interesting feature of Patton's paper is the application of 'general elimination methodology' (GEM) as an approach to establishing causation of the Supreme Court's ruling. Following Patton's provocative paper, Scriven presents a summative evaluation of RCT methodology, and an outline of GEM methodology as an alternative to the RCT approach. In this paper, he argues that the RCTs currently being proposed are not in fact true RCTs and/or do not eliminate alternative explanations, for reasons that have not previously received much attention. Then, Daniela Schröter, myself, and Bianca Montrosse present a study of peer review of abstracts submitted for the American Evaluation Association (AEA) annual

conference by the Graduate Student and New Evaluators (GS&NE) Topical Interest Group (TIG). In this paper, suggestions are made for improving the overall quality of TIG reviews of submissions to the annual AEA conference to better construct an impartial and reliable system for proposal selection.

In a special section of this issue, titled "Evaluation in International Development," Thomaz Chianca and Paul Clements provide suggestions for improving evaluation efforts in the context of international development. Chianca's paper first presents an assessment of the existing, and widely used, OECD/DAC criteria for international development evaluations that were produced as part of his doctoral work.<sup>1</sup> He concludes with some suggestions for improving these criteria. Then, Clements writes about his concept of an association to improve evaluation of development aid. In this paper, he argues that major improvements to development aid and evaluations of them would occur if the management of development programs and projects could be governed by an effective orientation to cost-effectiveness. This special section concludes with a commentary on Clement's paper by Hellmut Eggers and Clement's response to the commentary.

In our popular "Ideas to Consider" section, Scriven explains 'the economist's fallacy' mentioned in the editorial and why this corrupts

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<sup>1</sup> Chianca, T. K. (2007). *International aid evaluation: An analysis and policy proposals*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

the identification of costs in evaluation. Four reviews of important recent books wrap up this issue. First, Daniela Schröter and Jessica Urschel review *Logic Modeling Methods in Program Evaluation*. This review is followed by Amy Gullickson's review of the *Systems Concepts in Evaluation* anthology published through AEA. Next, Jessaca Spybrook reviews *Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice*. The final book review in this issue is provided by Anne Cullen, in which she reviews *Youth Participatory Evaluation: Strategies for Engaging Young People*.