



honest view” of the possibilities and down sides of health care IT—“seared into the psyche of the health reform leadership.”

“The biggest mistake we could make right now would be to give a lot of money to individual vendors to buy a bunch of IT systems and then find they don’t connect, they don’t interoperate, they’re not driven to performance,” said Don Detmer, MD, MA, president and CEO of the American Medical Informatics Association. The aim, he said, is quality health care, not the applications in themselves. “We need to focus on how to get carbon and

silicon to interface, as opposed to just focusing on the silicon,” he said.

While David Bates, MD, chief of the division of general medicine at Brigham and Woman’s Hospital in Boston, doesn’t question the need for quality health care, he did take issue with the report’s recommendation to focus on programs aimed at quality improvement and avoid those that promote adoption of clinical applications.

“There are some clinical applications that have been demonstrated to be associated with improvement,” said Bates, whose site was one of those visited by the committee. He pointed out

that computer order entry has been associated with improved medication safety (Bates DW et al. *JAMA*. 1998; 280[15]:1311-1316). “We passed a law in Massachusetts that will require all hospitals in the state to adopt computer order entry, and I think that’s a good thing.”

Aside from these issues, Bates noted that overall he found the recommendations in the report to be “consonant with the direction people [in the health-care field] think we should move in” and said they will provide useful guidance for those directing the future of health care IT. □

## JAMA Editor Honored as Champion of Integrity in Scientific Research and Publishing

Rebecca Voelker

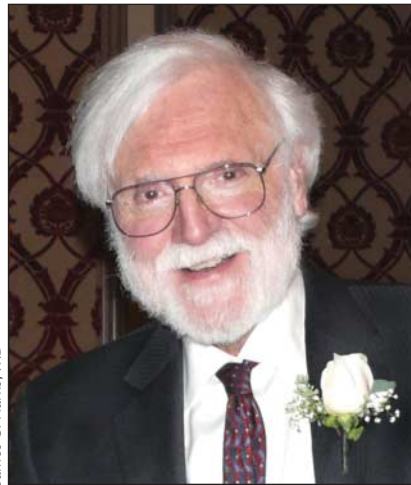
VETERAN *JAMA* EDITOR Drummond Rennie, MD, has received the Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in recognition of his advocacy for the free exchange of unbiased scientific information.

The AAAS called Rennie a “visionary in safeguarding the integrity of how scientific information is gathered and communicated.” The award cites his “career-long efforts to promote integrity in scientific research and publishing” as well as his “outspoken advocacy for the freedom of scientists to publish in the face of efforts to suppress their research.”

Rennie, deputy editor for *JAMA* and adjunct professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, has been a leader in working to keep unreliable or biased data from being published in the scientific literature. In numerous speeches and articles he has addressed scientific misconduct, editorial freedom, research accountability, conflicts of interest, industry-sponsored research,

and standards for reporting research—particularly in clinical trials.

Donald Kennedy, PhD, former editor-in-chief of the journal *Science*, said Rennie is an “icon of fairness and sound policies in the world of medical publishing.”



Drummond Rennie, MD

As originator and chair of 5 International Congresses on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication, Rennie created a forum for researchers to present and discuss new findings on methods used to evaluate and disseminate biomedical

information. In effect, he ushered in a new field of empirical research into how science is conducted and translated into practice. The field now focuses on such issues as how publishing is affected by authorship issues, peer review, funding, conflicts of interest, publication bias, reporting standards, and other factors.

The AAAS also noted that Rennie has been a “tireless advocate” for scientists pressured by industry and other forces to suppress or limit publication of research that could have a negative impact on a commercial product. For example, after receiving unsolicited documents that contained communications among executives, lawyers, and scientists showing that they knew of the addictive, cancer-causing properties of cigarettes, he shepherded manuscripts based on that information through to publication in *JAMA*. Those studies and the media attention they received reached an estimated 200 million people and made a lasting impact on public policy and public health.

Rennie holds a medical degree from the University of Cambridge in England. He received the award in February during the 175th AAAS meeting in Chicago. □