



Neurology

Ready for the new millennium

Robert C. Griggs, MD

Neurology is celebrating the new millennium by introducing important, additional features that will make the journal more reader friendly and enable us to better serve the authors of outstanding clinical papers.

Twice-monthly publication. Our 1999 increase to 18 issues per year has proved a resounding success. Combined with our more rapid review of papers, the increased frequency of publication has made it even easier to expedite important papers. Expedited papers can now be published within 10 to 12 weeks of submission. In addition, we have much greater flexibility in grouping papers, editorials, and special articles.

Starting with this issue, *Neurology* will be published twice monthly. The journal will be mailed to our subscribers on the first and third Tuesday of every month. (Cover dates are the second and fourth Tuesdays.) The news embargo will be lifted at 4:00 PM on the day before the cover date, concurring with the anticipated receipt of the journal by subscribers. The expanded number of issues will allow us to highlight special items of interest and to list authors' names on the cover of the journal.

We will continue to feature one to four editorials per issue, both to emphasize the importance of clinical advances and to provide clinical perspective for basic papers. We are also including Views and Reviews in each issue. The increased number of important, expedited publications as well as the greater number of editorials and Views and Reviews may, in part, account for the marked increase (11%) in *Neurology's* impact factor last year.

The on-line journal. *Neurology* went on-line with the full text of the journal in January 1999. The number of "hits" for the on-line journal has risen steadily. The search capabilities and links to medical literature are a noteworthy feature. Moreover, the electronic journal has made possible a number of new features that we will be implementing this year, such as the ability to archive data and publish correspondence rapidly.

Archiving of data. We are receiving an increasing number of clinical trials and other major prospective

studies. Top-quality clinical studies inevitably require the publication of large volumes of data for the benefit of other investigators in the field. At the same time, the general neurologist appreciates a succinct paper with concise tables and figures that provide the salient points. With the electronic journal we can satisfy both concerns. While the print and on-line journals will offer a concise presentation of data, more extensive data can be accessed instantly on-line. This should soon result in shorter, more focused articles and ultimately, a condensed journal issue. The National Auxiliary Publication Service (NAPS) will no longer be used.

Timely correspondence. Effective with this issue, we will be posting appropriate correspondence concerning just-published papers on the journal's web site within days of their receipt.

Subsequent, related correspondence will be similarly posted (including responses from the author). We believe that this will create a freer, more lively forum for the discussion of important topics. Journal policy will continue to limit correspondence to published journal articles.

Other features. This year we also plan to initiate: 1) a continuing medical education program; 2) a "personalized" reader-directed journal where key words selected by the journal subscriber will alert the reader via regular e-mail about articles (and any correspondence, corrections, and related papers) pertinent to their chosen area of interest; 3) publication of video clips with submitted articles; and 4) a forum for editors, authors, and readers to engage in the discussion of timely topics.

Ombudsman—Addressing concerns about *Neurology* policies. *Neurology* frequently receives complaints from authors who feel that their papers should not have been rejected. This is inevitable. Because we only accept 20% to 25% of submitted papers, many rejected papers are indeed excellent. The *Neurology* Ombudsman will not deal with general complaints about rejected papers. However, complaints concerning inappropriate bias or other concerns about the Editorial Office, or perceived improper handling of submitted papers, can be

addressed to the *Neurology* Ombudsman. The Ombudsman office has functioned usefully at other journals.¹ *Neurology's* plan is modeled after one instituted several years ago by the *Lancet*. The Ombudsman's report will be published annually. Jack Whisnant, MD, has been appointed Ombudsman by the Academy. Details about procedures for referring matters to the Ombudsman are listed in Information for Authors at www.neurology.org

Changes in the Editorial Board. There are four new appointments to the Editorial Board. All are distinguished experts in their areas and have been busy, reliable, and skilled reviewers for *Neurology*:

Richard J. Barohn, MD, Dallas, TX; Samuel F. Berkovic, MD, Melbourne, Australia; Tsutomu Nakada, MD, Niigata, Japan; and Michael J. Painter, MD, Pittsburgh, PA. We welcome their expertise to the Board.

Rotating off the Editorial Board are Philip Chance, Gerry Fenichel, Ludwig Gutmann, and Salvatore DiMauro. They have done a splendid job for the Journal, and the Editors are indebted to them.

Reference

1. Horton R. The Journal Ombudsperson: a step toward scientific press oversight. *JAMA* 1998;280:298-299.

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