

## Message from the Editor

### Editorial Board

As the Journal begins its twenty-sixth year of publication, I am pleased to welcome new members to the Editorial Board: Timothy J. Benstead, Antoine M. Hakim, Mark J. Morrow, Douglas Kondziolka, Peter M. Richardson, Guy A. Rouleau, Paul Steinbok, and Jonathan A. Stoessl. Dr. Andres M. Lozano, a member of the Board, became an Associate Editor in September, 1998.

Dr. Benstead is an Associate Professor at Dalhousie University, and attending neurologist at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre, Halifax. He was graduated in Medicine from the University of Calgary and took his neurology residency in Halifax followed by a fellowship in peripheral nerve and EMG at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. He serves as a reviewer in neuromuscular diseases.

Dr. Hakim received a PhD degree in biomedical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute in Troy, New York and his medical degree from Albany Medical College, New York. After a neurology residency at McGill, he joined its faculty with appointment to the Montreal Neurological Institute. Since 1992 Dr. Hakim has been Professor and Chairman of the Division of Neurology at the University of Ottawa where he directs the Neuroscience Research Institute.

Dr. Mark Morrow is a medical graduate of Boston University and completed a neurology residency at the University of California at Los Angeles. After a Fellowship in neuro-ophthalmology at the University of Toronto, Dr. Morrow took a faculty position at UCLA. In 1998 he moved to Case Western Reserve University where he is an Associate Professor. Dr. Morrow brings expertise in Neuro-ophthalmology and Neuro-otology to the Board.

Dr. Kondziolka is a medical graduate of the University of Toronto where he also completed a residency in neurosurgery. After a fellowship in radiation oncology and neurosurgery at the University of Pittsburgh he obtained his first faculty appointment there and is now a Professor of Neurosurgery and Radiation Oncology.

Dr. Richardson also received his MD followed by neurosurgery residency at the University of Toronto. He then pursued a research fellowship in neural regeneration at the Montreal General Hospital and McGill where he was appointed to faculty and is now a Professor of Neurosurgery.

Dr. Rouleau is a medical graduate of the University of Ottawa. After a residency in neurology at McGill University he earned a PhD in genetics at Harvard University. His first faculty appointment was to McGill University where he is now an Associate Professor and attending neurologist at the Montreal General Hospital.

Dr. Steinbok received his medical degree from the University of the West Indies and completed a residency in neurosurgery at the University of British Columbia followed by a fellowship in brain tumour immunology at the University of North Carolina. He then returned to Vancouver where he is now a Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of British Columbia and Head of Neurosurgery at its Children's Hospital.

Dr. Stoessl is a medical graduate of the University of Western Ontario where he also completed a neurology residency. After a fellowship in movement disorders at the University of British Columbia he received a faculty position in London, Ontario and later moved to the University of British Columbia and its University Hospital where he is a Professor of Neurology and Attending Neurologist.

Dr. John Wherret who has been an Associate Editor since 1995, and several members of the Editorial Board completed valued service in 1988: Peter Dyck, Pierre Duquette, Julian Hoff, Patrick McGeer, Ali Rajput, Garnet Sutherland, William Pryse-Phillips, and Jean Guy Villemure. I thank them for their important contributions over the years.

### Authorship Standards

The Journal has addressed the issue of criteria for authorship as previously discussed in these pages.<sup>1</sup> At its last meeting the Editorial Board recommended that the Journal adopt the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, also known as the Vancouver Group standards,<sup>2</sup> as described in the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals.<sup>3</sup>

All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content. Authorship credit should be based only on substantial contributions to: 1) either the conception and design, or the analysis and interpretation of data; and to 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and on 3) final approval of the version to be published. Conditions 1, 2, and 3 must all be met. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data does not justify authorship. General supervision of the research group is not sufficient for authorship. Any part of an article critical to its main conclusions must be the responsibility of at least one author. Editors may ask authors to describe what each contributed; this information may be published.

Increasingly, multicenter trials are attributed to a corporate author. All members of the group who are named as authors, either in the authorship position below the title or in a footnote, should fully meet the above criteria for authorship. Group members who do not meet these criteria should be listed, with their permission, in the Acknowledgements or in an appendix.

The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the co-authors. Because the order is assigned in different ways, its meaning cannot be inferred accurately unless it is stated by the authors. Authors may wish to explain the order of authorship in a footnote. In deciding on the order, authors should be aware that many journals limit the number of authors listed in the table of contents and that the U.S. National Library of Medicine lists in MEDLINE only the first 24 authors plus the last author when there are more than 25 authors.<sup>2</sup> These standards will be promoted by having the corresponding author sign a form stating that all authors have met the criteria proposed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

### Supplements to the Journal

In 1998 we published four supplements, one being the abstracts and proceedings of the Canadian Congress of Neurological Sciences, and others were on Electrophysiological Studies in the Critical Care Unit, Focus on Topiramate: a New Advance in the Treatment of Epilepsy, and Current Issues on the Drug Treatment of Epilepsy. Supplements are welcomed. Their contents undergo review, with the exception of supplements containing only abstracts of meeting proceedings.

The Journal's ten policy principles for processing supplements were adopted in 1991<sup>4</sup> and are listed below:

- 1) The supplement must have a coordinator who is an expert in its theme. The coordinator is responsible for compiling articles to be submitted.
- 2) The topic must be of importance to Journal subscribers.
- 3) Before soliciting manuscripts, the supplement coordinator must obtain the approval of the Editor-in-Chief for submitting them for review.
- 4) All articles submitted must undergo review by members of the Editorial Board or by ad hoc reviewers for the Journal who are not authors of articles in the supplement.
- 5) Final decisions concerning acceptance or rejection of submitted articles is the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief, not the coordinator or sponsor.
- 6) The supplement must be sponsored to meet the expenses of its publication.
- 7) The coordinator or the authors must receive no financial gain from compiling the articles to be submitted as a supplement, or from their publication.
- 8) The content must not be biased in the interest of any sponsor.
- 9) After review, the number of accepted articles must be sufficient to constitute a body of important information that is current and of interest to the neurological science community.
- 10) The contents of a supplement are subject to the same copy-right regulations that apply to articles published in regular issues of the Journal.

### Twenty-five Years Ago in the Journal

In 1998, the Journal's twenty-fifth year, we began publishing abstracts of articles that were published a quarter century ago. These will continue to appear in the preliminary pages of each issue. We hope that these summaries of information, then current, will provide readers with some perspective on the progress that has been made in the neurological sciences over the intervening years and an appreciation of the value and prevailing pertinence of previous work.

### The Review Process

We typically use three reviewers to assist authors in revising their papers and to advise the Editor-in-Chief about their suitability for publication in this Journal. The reviewers' identities are masked to authors, in keeping with our policy of maintaining confidentiality of reviewers and in the belief that this encourages frankness in the reviews. We also mask the identity of reviewers from each other, when we inform reviewers of the final editorial

decision about the papers' outcomes and provide them with copies of all the reviews. We do not blind the reviewers to the identity or institution of the authors. Blinding might reduce any bias and might improve the quality of reviews. A series of studies has challenged some presumptions about the peer review process.<sup>5-8</sup> Blinding the authors' identities and masking the reviewers' identities to other reviewers makes no differences in the quality of the reviews or in the reviewers' recommendations about publication,<sup>5,7,8</sup> although hiding the authors identities is successful only about 30-40% of the time.<sup>5,7</sup> Reviewers who are blinded to the authors and their institutional origins are less likely to recommend rejection of papers for publication.<sup>6</sup> However, concealing the authors' identities makes no difference in the degree to which the review influences the editorial decision.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that this journal can correctly persist in its practice of identifying authors to reviewers. Revealing reviewers' identities to their fellow reviewers might be left to the preference of the reviewers themselves, but we continue our practice of masking them.

### Reviewers in 1998

I express my thanks to the many individuals who share their expertise and time as referees of submitted papers. All papers undergo peer review and most are reviewed by one or more members of the Editorial Board, but their work is only a portion of the advice that other, ad hoc, consultants provide me in their reviews. I am also grateful to our Managing Director, Sally Gregg and Administrative Assistant, Margaret Peterson who are together responsible for the processing of manuscripts and reviews and the preparation of each issue. The names of reviewers of manuscripts submitted in 1998 are listed on page 3 of this issue.

*James A. Sharpe, MD*

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