

40 Year Anniversary Issue of Neurochemical Research

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I had just come back from a fantastic post-doc period with Dr. Eugene Roberts at the City of Hope Hospital in Duarte, CA, starting my independent research group at the University of Copenhagen working among other topics on characterization of GABA transport in cultured astrocytes. Obviously, having worked with Eugene Roberts for almost 2 years, I had to choose a topic related to GABA. At the time the experimental work was about ready for publication I learned about a new journal, which had been launched by Dr. Abel Lajtha: “Neurochemical Research”, abbreviated Neurochem. Res. While attending some of the first Meetings of the American Society for Neurochemistry (ASN), I had had the good fortune of being introduced to Dr. Lajtha, and I immediately realized that he was not only a brilliant neurochemist, but also a fantastic human being. Therefore, it was an easy decision to submit my manuscript

[1] for publication in Neurochem. Res. In spite of the fact that the manuscript received an efficient editorial handling, it did not make into the inaugural volume of the journal, but was published in volume 2 in 1977 and it has since been cited frequently.

A decade later, I was approached by Dr. Lajtha asking me if I would be willing to join the Editorial Board of Neurochem. Res. Based on my experience with submission of manuscripts to the journal, where the editorial procedures used by Dr. Lajtha and his Editorial Board were always fair and just, it was an easy decision to make and I gladly accepted the offer. This led to many years of service to the journal with Dr. Lajtha as an extremely efficient and knowledgeable Editor-in-Chief. At that time and during many years the journal was operated without a group of “Associate Editors” which meant that the Chief Editor had to overlook all submitted manuscripts, an overwhelming task requiring a lot of work and dedication.

During the year 2011, the structure of Neurochem. Res. underwent some changes, the most important being that a number of Assoc. Editors were appointed to facilitate the work load of the Editor-in-Chief. This had become essential considering the ever increasing number of submissions, now from around the world. At the same time a search committee was established, the task of which was to identify a new Editor-in-Chief to succeed Dr. Lajtha who had managed this task for 36 years [2]. As pointed out by the Publisher [3] in a note following an editorial by Dr. Lajtha [2], the enormous work over the period since its conception was reflected by the fact that the journal had published over six thousand articles, obviously representing many more submitted manuscripts most if not all of which had been handled by Dr. Lajtha; in other words an average of more than 200 manuscripts had been handled on a yearly basis. Even at the current submission rate of about

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850 manuscripts a year this represents a work load which exceeds that of each current member of the Board of Associate Editors. Nevertheless, we may well have to implement a small increase in the number of Associate Editors to limit the work load.

As of the January 2011 issue of *Neurochem. Res.*, I was appointed as the new Editor-in-Chief. As a continuation in the effort to attract high quality manuscripts, it was decided to regularly publish special issues of *Neurochem. Res.* honoring outstanding neuroscientists and 2–4 such issues have been published every year. Apparently, this together with an editorial effort to attract regular manuscripts of high quality has resulted in an improvement of the impact factor of our journal. It is hoped that during the next years these efforts will result in a further improvement of the impact factor. This is important in the light of the increased competition for funding due to which publishing in high impact journals becomes ever more imperative.

In the light of the significant changes in the efficiency of the handling of submitted manuscripts, the journal has reduced the time to first decision to about 30 days. This is the result of the highly efficient and dedicated group of Associate Editors. I am confident that during the next few years *Neurochemical Research* will become even more important as a leading journal in the neuroscience field, which is rapidly growing. It is not unlikely that we may

soon experience a submission rate of manuscripts exceeding 1000 per year.

The letter by Dr. Lajtha [2] contains a photo showing in addition to Dr. Lajtha, the Administrative Secretary Kristine Immediato and the Managing Editor Henry Sershen. It should be pointed out that these two persons had been instrumental for the smooth running of the journal for several years and it was a great pleasure for me when I accepted to take over as Editor-in-Chief, that these two persons agreed to continue in their respective positions. Without their continued help and support my work would have been very difficult. I also thank the publisher Springer for their support of the journal, as we welcome the next decade of *Neurochemical Research*.

Editor-in-Chief

References

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