Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology under new editorship: change and continuity

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Effective July 1, 2016, I will become the Editor-in-Chief of *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology*, the oldest existing pharmacological journal founded in 1873 (Starke 1998) as successor of Prof. Dr. Martin Michel, who has steered the journal since 2002. I would like to cordially thank Martin for his dedicated and outstanding service to the journal. Martin has served in various functions for *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* without interruption since 1994 and will continue as Associate Editor.

Under Martin's direction, *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* has prospered: The number of submissions to the journal has doubled since 2005. This is remarkable in light of the fact that several other traditional pharmacology journals are suffering decreases in their submissions, a development that is in part due to the competition by new open-access journals and many specialized journals covering one aspect or another of pharmacology. However, this increase in submission has neither resulted in an inflation of the content nor quality of *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology*. This is reflected by a current manuscript acceptance rate of 39 % that is similar to the rates of other leading pharmacology journals.

Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology has become a fast journal with a 26-day interval from submission to the first decision in 2015. Once accepted, publication occurs fast, and the online-first publication ensures rapid dissemination of an article in the scientific community before a print issue has been determined. The journal now also features an

open access-option for authors, broadening exposure of a paper to the scientific community. However, even without the open-access option, the journal is available in almost 10,000 institutions worldwide.

Under Martin's leadership, the journal has become truly international with submissions from more than 30 countries in 2015. In 2015, the countries with the most publications were Germany > Egypt > China > Poland > Brazil > India > Japan. The increasing internationality of the journal is also being reflected by the composition of the Editorial Board and the Editorial Advisory Board. Members of these two boards contributed very substantially to the high quality of the journal, also reflected by a stable impact factor of around 2.5. I wish to thank our board members for their excellent service to the journal.

Martin introduced several new features into the journal such as theme issues (Gomsyan and Szallasi 2015; Hsu et al. 2015), comprehensive non-clinical single compound reviews (Modjtahedi et al. 2014; Michel et al. 2015a), editorials (Michel et al. 2015b; Schneider et al. 2015; Seifert 2015a), debates (Seifert 2014; Gao and Vanhoutte 2014), letters to the editor (Michel-Reher and Michel 2015), and meeting reports (Friebe et al. 2015; Heifetz et al. 2015; Schneider and Seifert 2015), stimulating scientific exchange. Papers in these sections are downloaded very frequently. In the field of validation of receptor antibodies, *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* has earned exceptionally high international recognition and constitutes the leading international discussion forum on this important topic (Beermann et al. 2012; Böhmer et al. 2014; Ashton et al. 2014; Cécyre et al. 2014; Cernecka et al. 2014; Tripathi et al. 2016).

Pharmacology has always changed in terms of methods and research topics, but the chemical compound, be it an experimental tool, a drug candidate, or a clinically approved drug, has always been in the center. This will continue to be

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the case for pharmacology as academic discipline and the mission of the journal. At the turn of the millennium, *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* had a focus on biogenic amines, particularly adrenoceptors and serotonin receptors. Over the years, the topics covered in *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* have become more diverse, cancer pharmacology (Modjtahedi et al. 2014; Cheng et al. 2015), immunopharmacology (Merzoug et al. 2014; Cheng et al. 2015, Imeri et al. 2015), and pharmacology of natural compounds (Cheng et al. 2015) being important current themes. I will continue to welcome papers from these fields, but for natural compound studies, rigorous chemical characterization of ingredients and, within reasonable means, testing of identified lead compounds are mandatory (Michel et al. 2005).

With my own expertise in the field of molecular and cellular signal transduction, encompassing G-protein-coupled receptors, G-proteins, and second messenger systems, specifically cyclic nucleotides (for review, see, e.g., Seifert and Wenzel-Seifert 2002; Gille and Seifert 2004; Seifert et al. 2012; Seifert 2015b; Strasser et al. 2015), I would be pleased to receive papers from these areas. I myself have published numerous original papers in these areas in *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* during recent years (see, e.g., Bräunig et al. 2014; Laue et al. 2014; Wolter et al. 2014; Werner et al. 2016a, b; Reinartz et al. 2015a, b). Two of these papers (Bräunig et al. 2014; Wolter et al. 2014) contributed to discussions on controversial literature data and the importance of proper statistics in pharmacology (Seifert 2014; Gao and Vanhoutte 2014; Motulsky 2014b).

Martin is handing over to me the journal in such an excellent state and with such dedicated Editorial Board and Editorial Advisory Board that no revolution in running the journal will occur, but evolution will take place: Since non-reproducibility of data is a big issue (Kannt and Wieland 2016), we will foster high standards in terms of statistics (Michel 2014; Motulsky 2014a). Related to this, I will consider papers that corroborate or confirm important hypotheses in pharmacology, and solid papers on failed attempts to reproduce data will be favorably received as well. In addition, every paper will be carefully checked for potential plagiarism to guarantee the highest scientific integrity of the journal possible.

Why did I gladly accept Martin's kind invitation to take over the position as Editor-in-Chief of *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* without hesitating a moment? I have published 47 papers in the journal since 1989, and with very, very few exceptions, I was always extremely pleased with the rapidity, quality, and fairness of the peer review and publication process. My papers have always become much better as a result of the review process, but the effort to revise a paper was always reasonable. My students, many of whom published their results in *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology*, were also very

happy with the journal. In most cases, publication of my students' papers coincided more or less with the defense of their doctoral theses and, thereby, facilitated their professional careers. Most importantly, I could always openly discuss unresolved and controversial questions and did not have to sell a perfect story (see, e.g., Kinast et al. 2012; Bräunig et al. 2014). Along these lines, I encourage our authors to be very frank and open on limitations of the data and problems in the field. I also like the very flexible format of the journal with no specific limitations to length or number of references. "Science first," academic rigor, and honesty are important characteristics of the journal. The papers by Seifert and Wenzel-Seifert (2002) and Appl et al. (2012) are excellent examples for the formal flexibility of *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* to accommodate very complex scientific content and to present it clearly. Therefore, it is now time for me to give back to the journal the dedication that my students and I have perceived over almost three decades as authors.

I am also delighted about the reception of my papers published in the journal by the scientific community. In fact, my most-cited publication, a review on constitutive GPCR activity (Seifert and Wenzel-Seifert 2002), has been cited 356 times so far. And several of my original publications from various areas (including papers with "negative" data) published in the journal have also been cited fairly often (see, e.g., Burde et al. 1989; Seifert et al. 1989; Ervens et al. 1991; Appl et al. 2012; Beermann et al. 2012). A recently published meeting report (Heifetz et al. 2015) reached more than 900 downloads within 4 months.

I will follow the path of Martin and encourage submission of high-quality papers from every field of experimental pharmacology. I will also welcome concise reviews on defined drug targets such as a specific GPCR, enzyme or ion channel, orphan drugs constituting an as yet almost completely uncharted territory. I myself plan to submit to the journal a review on a poorly studied drug target, adenylyl cyclase 9 (Werner et al. 2016a, b). Suggestions for themed issues (see, e.g., Gomsyan and Szallasi 2015; Hsu et al. 2015) or meeting reports (see, e.g., Heifetz et al. 2015; Friebe et al. 2015; Schneider and Seifert 2015) are appreciated as well. Moreover, I could envisage publishing issues that focus on the pharmacological achievements of a particular country or geographical region. As a new section for the journal, I will introduce book reviews on pharmacology. Suggestions for books to be considered in this section are appreciated and should be directed to me.

So to conclude, why should you send your top papers to *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology*? Together with the distinguished Editorial Board and Editorial Advisory Board, I will ensure a rapid and fair review process of your best papers from every field of experimental pharmacology. You can rest assured that I will not be biased towards perceived trendy or hot topics, but I am certainly biased towards

rigorous science. Authors will enjoy a flexible publication format with minimal constraints to put science at the center stage. In view of the data reproducibility crisis (Kannt and Wieland 2016), it will become increasingly important that important data be either confirmed or disputed. Papers addressing both directions will be considered. The journal will also continue to be a platform for discussing important papers in the form of editorials or debates, be it papers published in *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* or elsewhere (see, e.g., Seifert 2014, 2015a; Gao and Vanhoutte 2014; Schneider et al. 2015). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a specific publication project for *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* in mind or would like to obtain my advice on a paper that does not exactly fits to traditional foci of the journals such as toxicological themes with a mechanistic thrust. I look forward to productively working with the Editorial Board, the Editorial Advisory Board, our authors, and the publisher Springer-Nature to further strengthen the role of *Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* as an important pharmacological journal.

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