



Pioneers in neurology: a silver anniversary perspective

Andrew J. Larner¹ · Jan van Gijn² · Lazaros C. Triarhou³

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“We stand on the shoulders of the European giants who shaped neurology as a separate medical discipline: from Charcot to Babinski, from Romberg to Strümpell, from Willis to Gowers, from Ramón y Cajal to van Gehuchten... In 2000 we shall add a regular section about the neurologic heritage alluded to above, under the title *Pioneers in Neurology*” [1]. So went an editorial published 25 years ago announcing the inauguration of the Pioneers section of the *Journal of Neurology*. The present note celebrates this anniversary.

The idea of presenting short biographies of 1000 words of past Pioneers in neurology was conceived and put into effect by Jan van Gijn, who edited the section from 2000 to 2013, after his stint as a Joint Chief Editor. Andrew J. Larner took on its running from 2013 to 2021. Lazaros C. Triarhou, the current acquisitions editor, succeeded to the role in 2021, and is now in a second 4-year term. One of the attractive features of this editorial role is that it offers a relatively effort-free way to learn about individuals one might never have heard of, based on the writings of clinicians and historians concerning lives which have engaged their enthusiastic research.

More than 320 Pioneers, from classical antiquity to the modern era, have featured in the series, at a rate of about 1 per month, from the very first paper on Howard Henry Tooth (1856–1925) of Charcot–Marie–Tooth disease renown [2]

to the latest publication on physiologist and Nobel laureate Sir Henry Hallett Dale (1875–1968) [3].

The current editors-in-chief of the *Journal* have previously acclaimed Jan van Gijn’s role, his “pioneering spirit and lead of our *Pioneers of Neurology* section, having solicited many fabulous articles to which he has often added his own edits to craft the accounts into what has become a unique and much loved part of the *Journal of Neurology*” [4].

In 1891, Wilhelm Erb (1840–1921), Adolph von Strümpell (1853–1925), Friedrich Schultze (1848–1934) and Ludwig Lichtheim (1843–1928) banded together to create a new journal, the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Nervenheilkunde*. It was renamed *Zeitschrift für Neurologie* in 1947. In 1971, the periodical adopted the lingua franca of the science world and became today’s *Journal of Neurology*, now marking 134 years of continuous publication. The foundation of the journal was a step toward neurology emancipating itself from neuropsychiatry and developing into its own medical field independent from psychiatry and internal medicine [5].

Articles in the Pioneers series are not obituaries; rather, they focus on the contributions of past clinicians and researchers, including key biographical information, but foremost, offering originality and a fresh perspective on their hallmark discoveries. The prospective authors are encouraged to avoid repeating information already published in Medline/Pubmed or readily available in web sources such as *Wikipedia* and so forth. In case that a pioneer was included in *The Founders of Neurology* (Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1953; 2nd edn., 1970), any new submission should update such a profile through original research. An attempt is made to maintain a balance between various national schools, basic and clinical neurosciences, classical and modern neurologists. Articles on women Pioneers who substantially contributed to progress in the brain sciences are particularly welcome.

Often, the challenge for authors is an exercise not in how much to include but in how much to prune in order to sketch an entire life and career in a 1000 word vignette and 10

✉ Andrew J. Larner
andrew.larner2@nhs.net

Jan van Gijn
jan@vangijn.com

Lazaros C. Triarhou
triarhou@psy.auth.gr

¹ Department of Brain Repair and Rehabilitation, Institute of Neurology, University College London, London, UK

² Department of Neurology, Utrecht University Medical Centre, Utrecht, The Netherlands

³ Division of Brain, Behavior and Cognition, Department of Psychology, Aristotelian University Faculty of Philosophy, Thessaloniki, Greece

select references, with the affinity that neurologist readers have developed for the *Journal* in mind.

As we enter the next quarter century, we look forward to the continued success of *Pioneers* and, in the long run, the golden jubilee!

Pioneers Collection link: <https://link.springer.com/collections/fbcefgijca>.

Declarations

Conflict of interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there are no conflicts of interest.

Ethical standards This study was performed in accordance with ethical standards.

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