Editorial

According to an update presented at an Editorial Board meeting of *Neuroendocrinology* held in Toronto, during Endo 2000 last June, the flow of manuscripts remains satisfactory. European and North American authors contribute almost equally three-quarters of total submissions. The rest of the world provides the other 25%, with a significant increase of papers submitted from South-East Asia. The Journal attracts an increasing number of manuscripts dealing with Cell Biology and Neuroanatomy, while Molecular Biology and Clinical Neuroendocrinology remain stable around 15 and 10% respectively.

The *initial evaluation time* is down to an average of 49 days (a 17% decrease with respect to the 1999 figure), with a total *submission to publication time* of 6.9 months (a 15% acceleration over a year ago). In parallel, the percentage of articles published more than 12 months after submission (usually manuscripts requiring several revisions) has fallen from 9 to 0%.

The overall situation of the Journal can thus be considered in progress, a statement confirmed by our 3.0 *impact factor* in 1999, a 20% increase over the preceding figure, as already mentioned in January. In order to reach this result, we have had to maintain stringent criteria, an effort which resulted in an increased overall rejection rate (48% in the two last semesters). The distribution of rejected papers includes 8% *Rapid Reject* or *Out of Scope* decisions (notified to authors in less than 10 days), 33% rejections following full evaluation, and 7% of non-resubmitted manuscripts after a *Major Revision* request.

I am aware that this policy may sometimes seem unfair, especially to young scientists. An increasing number of post-docs change labs before full completion of their experiments; members of a team often come under

pressure to become first authors on at least one publication, and thus break a nice story into separate, unequally innovative articles. But these constraints have resulted in an terrible inflation of the scientific literature: over three-quarters of the 4,500 indexed journals, most of them in Life and Biomedical Sciences, have an impact factor lower than 1.0 – which means that on average each article is not even cited once, and probably not read, in the 2 years following its publication.

New electronic media will undoubtedly lead in the near future to reappraise the role and the overall cost of many traditional journals. In the meantime however, a journal like ours can only remain attractive to its readership if we make sure each paper brings sufficiently novel and convincing data.

Previous recommendations of the Editorial Board have now been implemented. The presentation of figures has been improved, colour plates made available without charge when they bring added value to an article, and we have started to e-mail future tables of contents free of charge to those who request them (these are also freely available on Karger's website at www.karger.com).

Finally, we are in the process of implementing a web-based evaluation platform. This will further speed up the initial evaluation time, and represent a new step towards a more systematic electronic operation of the journal – an important asset in a time where young scientists increasingly screen the literature on the web rather than in the library.

The Editorial Office of *Neuroendocrinology* wishes you a nice summer and looks forward to reading your next paper.

Claude Kordon