

raising the bar

This is probably the first time that the Academy's Journal is making serious effort to acquire leadership in Neuroscience Journalism by sharing editorial responsibilities with counterparts outside Indian origin. The journal which has continued to be published for last 16 years, 4 times a year is now set to overcome barriers that lie in the way of local journals attaining national and global leadership in Neuroscience. I took over as Editor in March 2009 after which all the efforts have focused on enhancing visibility of the Journal. It was soon realized that the impact of Indian Journals, in general, and their citations has never been adequately addressed in this country¹ and, in general, do not match the International standards. Many argue that it is the reluctance of the Indian scientists to communicate their research results to local journals which has led to low citation of these journals. As a result the best research gets known by people outside India before it is even communicated within local journals, others believe that these Journals are not attractive venue for submitting articles. It is believed that scientists communicate those articles to these Journals that have either been rejected from International Journals or those that they themselves regard as second grade. The recognition of this problem by *Annals of Neurosciences* is thus very timely,² particularly when Chinese and European Journals have begun to take a lead in developing their indigenous journals and communicating their best publications in their own journals. Under the guidance of the Editorial Board, a strategy has been laid out to enhance readership by introducing new sections that will make a lasting impact on Indian and world neuroscience.

Promoting new support systems in Neurosciences

Annals of Neurosciences aims to lead the transformation of scientific environment in the country, counter the issues raised above by highlighting the thoughts that capture the hearts and minds of neuroscientists; by publishing articles that do not merely communicate research but also focus on issues that transcend mere acquisition of technology or establishment of new centres in India, those that promote value of human resources in advancing neuroscience research, by re-evaluating leadership roles of Neuroscience programs in the National Institutes, creating new publication/peer review ethics and set ethical standards for other Journals in the world and advocate new funding mechanisms. It also seeks to become a vibrant platform for advocating legislations in stem cell translation and therapy by promoting active role of young scientists and corporates in National Academies, Institutes, National task forces and Journals, and by publishing articles that defy dogma and promote policy research such that the impact of Neuroscience research is felt in our immediate society. This may lead to increased allocation of funds for Neuroscience. Therefore, publication of articles that promote Neuroscience outreach programs and lead to creation of more Foundations and Endowments that sponsor such efforts will ultimately promote solutions to diseases of Brain besides stimulating knowledge economy. Such issues are being covered under 'New Focus' section of the Journal. In my first editorial I announced its new focus to be on Neural Stem cells and Neuroscience policy. The commentaries are attempting to provide insight about how research structure should be revamped

discussing the implications of the new regulation allowing scientists to start their research companies representative of enhanced Academia-Industry partnership. Many of such articles have also argued the urgent need to promote young leadership in academics.

Focus on multidimensional scientific communication

The release of various issues in 2009 have witnessed new design, content and layout and the Journal now finds itself ready to take on the other regional journals including those from China, Japan and several other countries who have built their research around local journals. We introduced some new sections such as 'molecular shots' which features immunostaining pictures; 'Journal Club' which publishes commentaries by graduate and post doctoral students apart from routine research articles. 'Book reviews', 'Commentaries' and 'New Focus' section has also been introduced such that there is multidimensional flow of scientific information. We also published, for the first time, the disease biography of Stephen Hawking, the leading cosmologist who also suffers from ALS alongwith a commentary on his disease by Prof Walter Bradley. Such patients narratives are regarded as important tools of inspiring and promoting Science. Prof Bradley earlier raised questions about Hawking's ALS diagnosis in this commentary, due to the lack of documented evidence from Stephen Hawking's personal release, but later while reviewing the biography, he agreed with the symptoms associated with this disorder. This feature is a revolution in *Neuroscience journalism*, declares Dr Bradley stating that *Annals* will acquire leadership in this area and will continue to attempt to bridge the chasm that exists between the diseased and those who run the labs to study diseases. The October issue of the Journal has published a commentary from Tom Isaacs, the co

founder of Cure Parkinson's Trust in UK, on the need for innovation in Parkinson's disease highlighting the need to integrate and empower all the stakeholders, particularly the patients, in developing solutions to this dreaded disease. We also published the new research from the lab of Prof Chanda Kulkarni which showed the neuroprotective role of Gabapentin on Aminophylline induced epileptogenesis mouse model apart from articles communicated from the lab of Prof Thakur and Prof Mohankumar. Prof Denis English, the Founding Editor of *Stem Cells and Development*, adds, 'in the lead commentary' the journal can initiate its trek into unanswered questions of past investigators by reprinting portions of the classic work of Karl S Lashley who searched for the 'engram' from 1920 till 1950, never finding the elusive link thought to convert short term memory to one stable, came up with a number of brilliant alternate hypothesis'. The classics section is therefore, attempting to address such issues which have long been forgotten and remained unfunded for advancement of field. Printing the old articles of legendary researchers attempts to bridge this gap.

World Neuroscience leaders on the Board

This is the first time when so many International leaders have come to join hands under an Indian Journal reflecting the aims set by the Academy. The April issue of 2009 announced a new team of editorial board members that include the best brains and stem cell researchers in Neuro-sciences from around the world, representing almost all major countries. A deliberate attempt was

made to include only those names that have genuinely influenced the field. Denis English, the Founding Editor of *Stem cells and Development*, the Senior Editor of Journal has continued to provide constant guidance with his commentaries alongwith Prof S Prabhakar, the Head of Department of Neurology who is known to have led the indexing of *Neurology India*. Prof Anand Swaroop from NIH, USA whose leading work in retinal regeneration is well known, continues to play a prominent role as Executive Editor and has provided critical advice of how to seek out important partners. The other Senior Editor is Prof Ante Padjen from International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO). Prof Satyanarayana who is the Editor of Indian Journal of Medical Research, and Prof Gurudutta from Stem Cell Group in Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and Prof Shashi Bala Singh, the Director from DRDO, Leh are the part of editorial team. Rakesh Biswas, a friend, philosopher and Deputy Editor of *BMJ Case Reports* has been a major support in helping introduce innovations in medical journalism and will play a defining role in the further growth of the journal.

The editorial team is joined by the legendary Colin Masters from Australia who made significant discoveries in the field of Alzheimer's disease and Youdim Moussa from Israel who has also been involved in the discovery of several drugs for Parkinson's disease. Among the other well known scientists include, Prof Mriganka Sur from MIT, Prof Walter Bradley from University of Miami and Prof Tanaka from RIKEN, Japan. Prof Obaid Siddiqui, the founder Director of National Centre Biological Sciences (NCBS) and Prof Lakhota, the Dean of BHU are fellows of Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and have continued to guide on various

matters of the Journal while being on the panel. The new editorial board also included Prof MRS Rao, who was nominated by Prof CNR Rao as the Ombudsman. He is the President of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNSCAR), Bangalore. Prof A Surolia who is currently the Director of National Institute of Immunology (NII) remains the scientific advisor. Dr Y.K Gupta from AIIMS, Prof H H Garcia from Peru and the leading stem cell researcher Prof Peter Andrews from UK became the part of the editorial team. Mr Pavan Duggal, the person who revolutionised the cyberlaws and intellectual property in the country was joined by famous United States Patents Treaty Organisation (USPTO) attorney Michael Coblenz, who together provide constant legal support to the journal which is now being widely recognized as the fastest growing journal in this subcontinent.

Online submissions

The online submissions for *Annals of Neurosciences* have been implemented through a new portal www.annalsofneurosciences.org. A huge effort to scan, OCR, generate DOIs and reload the old issues into the brand new web site is nearing completion. Annals has partnered with Cross Ref and PHI services for the monumental job of tagging all articles and the accompanying cross references with their DOIs from 2005. This has been a very labour intensive process and some of my lab members and other volunteers are together building this strong foundation for years to come.

Indexing

Annals of Neuroscience has been indexed by CAS (Chemical Abstract Service), DOAJ, EBSCO, Index Copernicus and Google Scholar. A new e ISSN no has been obtained. Indexing with PUBMED is an extremely competitive process decided by a 15 member committee which meets to review more than 150 applications 3-4 times a year. The Journal is reviewed for evidence of scientific quality, peer review, ethical standards, disclosure statements, global audience and a promise

for emerging field combined with an International panel. While it is generally believed that Publishers play a significant role in indexing and offer a preexisting International audience to the Journal, the opportunity for board members to interface with policy makers, business houses, society and the media is partly compromised in the process. *Journal of Neurosciences* or the *Indian Journal of Medical Research* are examples that do not have publishing partners even though their citations have taken decades to build. It is expected that the Journal will acquire indexing and an impact factor in next two years and it is hoped that some decision is reached when Pubmed committee meets at the end of this year. The only other Neuroscience related journal in the country that has powered its way to indexing includes *Neurology India* and *Annals of Indian Academy of Neurology* whose focus, however, is on clinical Neurology. The recent release of impact factors has seen a significant decline among these

local journals. It is advisable to cite as many articles from the *Annals of Neurosciences* as is scientifically justifiable so that the goals of enhancing visibility to the journal are realised. More submissions from academy members and other readers will greatly aid the indexing and citations of the Journal.

Fund raising activities

Initial seed money came from the family and friends of Editor and Board members who understood the spirit behind the revitalizing of *Annals of Neurosciences* that they agreed was a national initiative. The Journal has been active on the fund raising activities. It is also proposed to announce neuroscience journalism fellowships to boost these activities. The Editorial team will soon announce these fellowships. The new proposal to enhance the advertising rates and subscription rates have also been introduced. This will enable the Journal to meet the increased costs of production. The members are requested to come forward and participate in these activities and donate liberally for this cause.

New Partners

The Journal is leaving no stone unturned in its aggressive pursuit of seeking out new stake holders and patrons in the advancement of the cause for which the Journal has been revitalised. Among the new readers of the Journal are PMO, Secretaries of DBT, CSIR, ICMR, major lobby groups in Business, Academia, Bureaucracy, Law Firms, Social Scientists and Patients such that its growth becomes truly inclusive.

Publishers

Indexing is greatly aided with the availability of Publishers but the consensus on seeking out a partner has not been reached yet. Three major publishers have independently contacted the Editor. These include *Bentham Publishers*, *BMJ* and *Medknow publishers*.

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