

While the need for systematic studies is unquestioned in medical research, there is still a place, and an important one, for the shrewd, and sometimes fortuitous clinical observation. At the bottom of this observation, there is a clinician capable of singling out, among the vast stream of every-day clinical information, the item which bears novelty or points to, maybe even explains, a mechanism hitherto unknown, or poorly understood. No large-scale effort of robotic medicine will do away with this need for serendipity in clinical medicine, and it is not difficult to predict that the human genome project will rather increase the value of such observations which help, in many ways, to translate basic science back into clinical practice or to ask new questions.

Singling out new entities among the myriad appearances of human disease bears that quality of novelty, even if it is sometimes crude in the beginning and in need of subsequent refinement.

The first description of the "Myelinopathia centralis diffusa" by *Hanefeld* and colleagues (*Neuropediatrics* 24, 244-248 [1993]) was a nice example and has found subsequent independent confirmation (1, 2). I am sure that the description of a "leukoencephalopathy with temporal lobe cysts" (*Neuropediatrics* 29, 225-228 [1998]) by *Olivier* and colleagues will similarly stand its ground, and the Journal is proud to host these and other outstanding contributions to pediatric neurology.

Even if unexplained in terms of pathophysiology, the observation of a spontaneously regressing pontine glioma by *Lenard* and colleagues (this issue) raises a question of comparable importance which highlights our lack of understanding of tumor biology regarding pontine gliomas. *NEUROPEDIATRICS* will continue to reserve space on center stage for such important contributions, and the first issue of 1999 will focus attention on a new neurometabolic disorder, a primary disturbance of leukotriene metabolism, which might open the door to a whole new class of neurometabolic disorders.

Over the years, a dedicated community of researchers, both clinicians and basic scientists, have helped to create this forum of the Journal, and I am deeply grateful for their high-profile contributions, both as authors and as reviewers. The latter is an unavoidable and often strenuous task without which it would be

impossible for an editor to steer the process of evaluation, and for authors to cast their raw material into proper form. The names of the many colleagues around the world who supported the Journal by their expert knowledge in form of reviews is listed below.

At the same time I would like to thank Prof. *Paul Evrard*, Paris, and Prof. *H. J. Hoffman*, Toronto, for their generous help and support as members of the Editorial Board. My welcome goes to the new members, Dr. *Marjo S. van der Knaap*, Amsterdam, and Prof. *J. M. F. Trijbels*, Nijmegen, who have already contributed steadily in the past and will now strengthen the expertise of the Editorial Board, particularly in neuroimaging and biochemistry.

Publishing good science in an anonymous and possibly empty virtual space may be a futile exercise. *NEUROPEDIATRICS* is therefore grateful for the very active and knowledgeable readership it has enjoyed over the last years who, by actively using the information provided by the Journal, have increased the impact factor to 1.98. This makes *NEUROPEDIATRICS* the currently leading journal in pediatric neurology worldwide.

The distribution of *NEUROPEDIATRICS* will gain further from the fact that it has been elected "Official Organ of the Society for Neuropediatrics (Gesellschaft für Neuropädiatrie)" which unites pediatric neurologists from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, as well as from other European countries.

Striving for excellence is a never ending challenge. At best this should be a mutual process between the Journal, its authors and readers. Having already gone quite a way together in this way we shall even step up our endeavors, not least for the benefit of our little patients who need this effort so much.

References

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