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Growing Pains and the Brain Pathology Stimulus Package

Dear Reader,

You might have noticed that our issues have been getting progressively thicker and that the number of articles published has increased over time. As we are still a relatively young journal, one can make the analogy that we are currently going through a growth spurt. In fact, I would dare say that we are in some sense going through puberty. When our journal was the newly born offspring of Paul Kleihues some 18 years ago, it was small but irresistible, still needing constant personal attention and a lot of tender love and care just to survive the first few years. Since that time, we have achieved many proud milestones with enviable distinction. Nonetheless, the transition to adulthood is filled with changes that can seem awkward and frightening at times (“**growing pains**”). Over the past 2 years, we have enjoyed a great surge in submissions of high quality original research manuscripts, while continuing our long tradition of minisymposia, review articles, case of the month series, historical perspectives, and the “controversies in neuropathology” opinion papers that have become such highly valued staples for our readership. As such, we are preparing to make changes for 2010 in order to transition our journal to its next phase of development.

Of course, as in life, not everything is rosy and during adolescence, one must sometimes deal with pimples, clumsiness, and rejection. Surprisingly, after relatively steady growth, our submission rates have slowed down in the last few months. The 3 leading hypotheses that I’d like to consider for this recent dip, along with our plans to deal with them (i.e., “**Brain Pathology Stimulus Package**”) are as follows: 1) a negative response to the drop of our impact factor below 4.0 for 2007 (published in mid 2008), 2) a gradual lengthening of the time from article acceptance to print publication (despite a short interval to electronic publication), and 3) widespread depression and lethargy due to the global recession and losses of research funding. As mentioned in prior issues, despite being among the highest in our field, our impact factors have bounced up and down over the years due to dependence on a relatively small number of articles being considered in the citations listings. Nevertheless, our journal’s recent growth should help greatly to stabilize this volatility and this will likely become more apparent in the next few years. By the time this current issue is published, the **2008 impact factor** should already be available, but I am pleased to report that our preliminary estimates show it to be **well above 5.0**. The delays in publication times for printed copies reflects our growth pains mentioned above, resulting in a fairly large backlog of accepted articles that could not come out fast enough, given our quarterly publication schedule. Therefore, as part of **Stimulus Plan #1**, our publisher has agreed to add up to 64 extra publication pages for the remainder of 2009. More importantly for the long term, **Stimulus Plan #2** involves switching to bimonthly publications starting in 2010. Between these two action plans, we anticipate that the print copy publication times will soon shorten considerably to match our highly competitive turnaround times for electronic submissions, the review/editorial process, and online publications. Nevertheless, for these changes to succeed, we will naturally depend on a higher submission rate than we had even a few years ago. Therefore, I urge you to please continue sending your best papers to Brain Pathology. Now is a particularly great time to submit! In terms of concern #3, President Obama has assured me that the economy will soon improve not only in the U.S., but all around the globe!

Arie Perry