

Editorial

Paul A. J. M. BOON, M.D., Ph.D.

Department of Neurology, Ghent University Hospital Gent, Belgium
Editor-in-Chief Acta Neurologica Belgica

In this last issue of Acta Neurologica Belgica (ANB), I would like to give you my very best wishes for a happy, healthy and successful New Year. May our common interest in neurology and neurological research be a continuous drive for the further diagnostic and therapeutic advancement to the benefit of our patients.

I have had the honour and privilege to serve as the editor-in-chief of ANB since 2002. Working with an enthusiastic national and international authorship and a selected group of expert reviewers has been a most rewarding experience. I would like to thank Dr. Robrecht Raedt, my editorial assistant, the Belgian Neurological Society, the editorial board of ANB, the authors, the reviewers and the publisher for their trust and their collaboration, commitment and dedication to ANB.

Acta Neurologica Belgica (ANB) is an international peer-reviewed neurological journal from Belgium. At a respectable age of 108 years, it is one of the oldest neurological publications in Europe and it has a prestigious past. Among others, Ludo van Bogaert and Lucien Sorel presented some of their early groundbreaking findings in our journal.

Since 2002, Acta Neurologica Belgica has undergone many changes. The most important ones have been the organisation of an editorial office run by an editorial assistant, the implementation of an electronic submission system and the introduction of novel manuscript categories. The neurological image section that was initiated in 2007 has become increasingly popular. Between 2002 and 2008 the number of submissions has more than doubled; accordingly the acceptance rate has decreased to 30%. Average time from submission to first decision and publication are now 37 days and 73 days respectively.

Presently, ANB publishes between 25 and 30 articles in 4 issues per year. Twenty percent of published papers are reviews, 25% are original papers and 40% are carefully selected case reports.

All subspecialties of neurology are regularly covered; stroke, epilepsy, oncology, dementia, movement disorders, MS and pain being the most frequently discussed topics. ANB has an official circulation of 500 copies and an impact factor (a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in the journal has been cited in a particular year) that has varied between 0.4 and 0.7 between 2002 and 2007 (ISI Web of Knowledge, 2007). It has become a truly international journal regularly publishing manuscripts from more than 10 different countries; contributions from Belgian researchers now account for 45% of all published materials.

However, in the light of increasing competition between international peer-reviewed journals and the advent of many new neurological journals that each try to fill gaps in the existing literature, the rationale for and the future of a national neurological journal from a small country can be questioned. In ongoing discussions within the Board of the Belgian Neurological Society and the Editorial Board of ANB, the option taken was to maintain ANB as an independent international sounding board of neurological research and practice in Belgium. The mission of ANB will have to be further refined and the relationship with the publisher, the concept of associate editors and further progress to a full e-journal are among the most important pending issues.

From now on, Professor Jean Schoenen, past secretary-general of the Belgian Neurological Society, will take over the editorship. I am confident that in his able hands and with the support of our membership Acta Neurologica Belgica will have a bright future and I wish him and the new editorial team all the best.

REFERENCES

ISI Web of Knowledge, JCR Science Edition 2007.