

the journal makes no page charges. The general layout and the individual papers are also good, but there are some improvements the editors could make. For one, it would be more helpful to readers if the contents were listed on the front of the cover, rather than the array of editorial personnel, which also appears on the inside of the cover. Similarly, it would be more useful if the reference at the top of the first page of each paper included first and last page numbers instead of the part number. Finally, I would prefer to see full titles of journals instead of abbreviated forms in the references at the end of each paper.

A more recent addition to the journal supply is *Human Reproduction*, published by IRL Press, which first appeared in January 1986. It has the particular interest of being the official organ of the newly formed European Society of Human Rep-

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roduction and Embryology, and, published only in English, will make the European contribution to this field of inquiry more accessible for the less linguistically accomplished. Among the journal's other attractions are that abstracts of papers presented at the first annual meeting of the society are published as a supplement and printed in standard letterpress, and that, so far, publication has been remarkably rapid — all 35 papers in the first three issues were published between two and five months from the time of their receipt. □

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Rhythmic research

Steven H. Strogatz

Chronobiology International. Editors Alain Reinberg and Michael Smolensky. Pergamon. 4/yr. UK £60 (institutional), £31 (individual); North America \$66.37 (institutional), \$51 (individual).

WE ALL have clocks inside of us. These internal oscillators control the daily cycles of body temperature, sleep and wakefulness, hormone titre, metabolism and so on. Chronobiology is the study of such biological rhythms and the endogenous clocks which generate them. Although physiological oscillations with a circadian or near 24-hour period have been identified in practically all eukaryotes studied, including some unicellular organisms, the molecular mechanisms behind these rhythms remain deeply mysterious.

In the past, research articles about chronobiology have been published in journals of ecology, genetics, physiology, statistics, cell biology, medicine, pharmacology, neurobiology, biomathematics and endocrinology. In other words, those of us concerned with biological rhythms have perforce become familiar with most of the journals in the biology library. *Chronobiology International* seeks to give rest to the weary.

Each issue contains about eight research articles, mostly concise reports of experimental work, often in pharmacology or endocrinology. Experimental subjects range from humans and rats to flies and *Euglena*. In the journal's first two years, few theoretical articles have appeared, and only one review article and one letter to the editor. Occasionally there are book reviews, meeting reports or announcements. European contributors

outnumber North Americans by about two to one, although the editorial board is more balanced.

The articles vary in quality. Many are well-written, first-rate pieces of work. On the other hand, in a journal devoted to rhythmic phenomena, it is disappointing that so many of the statistical analyses involve little more than the calculation of the best-fitting cosine. In fairness to this journal, however, an unsophisticated approach to time-series analysis pervades the chronobiology literature as a whole.

There are some refreshing editorial policies. During the review process, the authors remain anonymous to the referees. No author may be listed on more



CHRONOBIOLOGY INTERNATIONAL

Edited by
Alain Reinberg & Michael Smolensky

than three papers in any one annual volume, to ensure that others have a fair opportunity to publish. Articles are published about three or four months after acceptance.

The format is good, and figures are reproduced clearly, with ample space. Unfortunately some papers contain figures with clotted or miniscule lettering — probably the author's fault, but worthy of editorial attention.

With some tightening of standards on the part of the referees, *Chronobiology International* could provide a respectable home for research articles concerned with biological rhythms. □

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