

Fundamentals of fertility

Molecular Human Reproduction

Editor-in-chief Robert G. Edwards
Oxford University Press. 12/yr. Europe £341, elsewhere \$605 (institutional); Europe £105, elsewhere \$176 (personal)

Roger Gosden

The emergence of many new species of journals in recent years — like the flowering of new forms of life in the Cambrian period — is bound to be followed by mass extinctions, as only the fittest will survive. Reproductive biology and medicine have had their share of new arrivals, but *Molecular Human Reproduction* stands an excellent chance of surviving because it has a well-adapted phenotype and fills a vacant ecological niche.

Lest readers wonder whether such flattery is merely a friendly salute to the editors, genuine enthusiasm is better gauged by my subscription to the journal — which is attractively priced for both personal and institutional subscribers, especially as a package with *Human Reproduction* and *Human Reproduction Update* (a review journal available on CD-ROM).

This family of journals is cornering many important papers in reproduction, and not only from European laboratories. Its success reflects a dynamic and remarkable field, but is also much to the credit of Robert Edwards. Who better than the pioneer of *in vitro* fertilization to be the managing editor?

Molecular Human Reproduction evolved from *Human Reproduction* as a response to rapidly expanding research programmes in embryology, gametogenesis and genetic aspects of infertility, so that the mother journal could be free to concentrate on its more traditional, clinically related subjects. It also publishes reviews, letters and articles about ethical and legal aspects of the new technology.

Perusal of these monthlies is now virtually obligatory for scientists and clinicians working in the assisted-conception field, and

more and more authors make them their first choice for publishing their best work. A publication time in *Molecular Human Reproduction* of no more than three months after refereeing is another incentive. The journals are produced to the high standards that modern molecular biology and microscopy require for illustration. They will soon be published electronically and catalogued in the leading bibliographic databases.

My normal wait-and-see policy before submitting papers to new journals now seems unduly cautious, as *Molecular Human Reproduction* is set to become a dominant species in the reproduction literature. □

Roger Gosden is at the Centre for Reproduction, Growth and Development, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9NS, UK.

Cells in distress

Cell Stress and Chaperones

Editor-in-chief Lawrence E. Hightower
Churchill Livingstone. 4/yr. £145, \$199 (institutional); £95, \$140 (personal)

Helen Saibil and Peter Lund

The idea of a journal combining the disciplines of cell stress and molecular chaperones is a strong one in principle. The unifying theme of this field is that the molecular basis of the cellular response to stress (whether in the form of heat, toxic chemicals or physical damage) is to be found in the large array of protein families known as molecular chaperones.

These proteins are helpers and scavengers that deal with proteins that are unfolded, denatured or in transit, in both stressed and unstressed cells, and the journal's subject area ranges from the cell biology of the stress response to the mechanisms by which molecular chaperones work.

At present, *Cell Stress and Chaperones* is publishing a modest number of original reports: a mere drop in the recent flood of papers in this area, often in the highest-ranking journals. To justify its existence, the journal also needs to provide more general

information of interest to the disparate disciplines in the field. All the obvious ideas are there: meeting reports, mini-reviews, announcements, lists of recent papers, and a Web page. But the quality is mixed.

The mini-reviews are well written and of broad interest. The meeting reviews are excellent, but need to be more timely in this fast-moving field: a review of a May meeting appearing the following March is not particularly useful. The advance publicity for meetings is incomplete, and the list of general references is unstructured and indigestible. The Web page too is a disappointment, lacking even a link to the Chaperonin Home Page, a site that provides an object lesson in what could have been achieved.

Our overall verdict? Nice idea, but the excellent editorial board needs to persuade authors to submit more major papers and to commission more general review articles, and the publishers need to put themselves under a bit more stress to get it right. □

Helen Saibil is in the Department of Crystallography, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX, UK and Peter Lund is in the School of Biological Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK.

Mind and molecules

Molecular Psychiatry

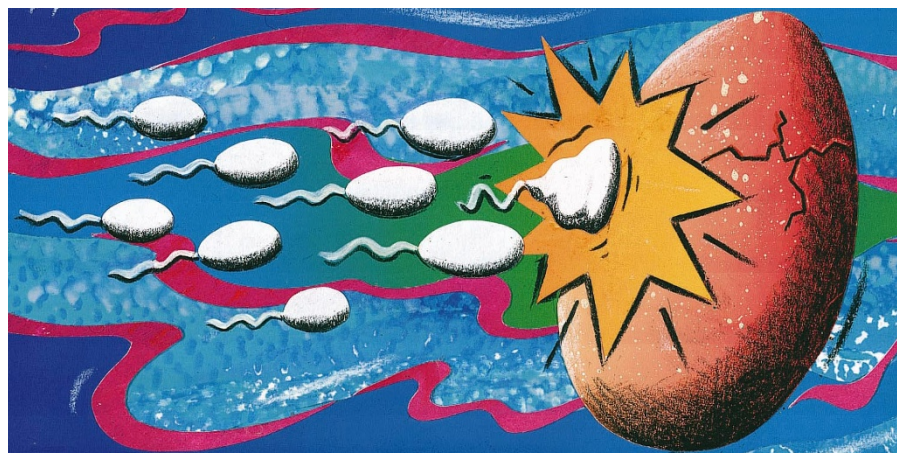
Editor Julio Licinio
Stockton. 6/yr. Europe £270, elsewhere £292 (institutional, print); \$135 (personal, print); worldwide £270 (institutional, online); Europe £297, elsewhere £321 (institutional, print and online)

Leslie Iversen

As in other branches of medicine, the tools of molecular biology are becoming increasingly important in psychiatric research. There is an air of expectancy that fundamental new insights into the biological basis of mental illnesses are likely to emerge from molecular genetics studies, although it has to be admitted that this is still a promise for the future. So, despite the fact that several other journals are available, the introduction of *Molecular Psychiatry* comes at an appropriate time.

The journal has an interesting and attractive format, with original research articles accounting for only about a third of the content — the rest being a mixture of editorials, news-and-views items, short reviews in the guise of perspectives or progress articles, meetings reports, a calendar and summaries of seminars or clinical grand rounds. This makes for interesting reading and gives the busy scientist or clinician a great deal of help in keeping up to date with a wide range of topics from drug addiction research to Alzheimer's disease.

The coverage includes preclinical as well



as clinical research (mainly the latter) and a range of molecular approaches including imaging, postmortem brain, pharmacology and molecular genetics studies. As might be expected, molecular genetics tends to predominate in the original articles section.

This is a nicely produced journal catering well to both preclinical and clinical researchers in the field. There are several alternative vehicles that publish original articles, including *Biological Psychiatry*, *Neuropsychopharmacology* and *Archives of General Psychiatry*, but none has the focus of *Molecular Psychiatry* nor do they emulate its news magazine format.

How long this entertaining format can be maintained will depend on the energy and dedication of the editor — in its current form the journal can be recommended to preclinical and clinical researchers involved or interested in this field as a valuable way of keeping informed. □

Leslie Iversen is in the Department of Pharmacology, University of Oxford, Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3QT, UK.

Hearing and balance

Audiology and Neuro-Otology: Basic Research and Clinical Applications

Editor-in-chief Manfred Hoke

Karger. 6/yr. \$373, CHF447 (institutional); \$130.60, CHF156.50 (personal)

S.M. Khanna

Neuro-otology, a young branch of otology, is now prospering as advances in neurology and neurosurgery make it possible to diagnose and treat acoustic neurinomas and other neurological disorders. The focus of this new journal is to integrate audiology and neuro-otology at both the basic and the clinical levels. The editorial board is impressive, consisting of some of the leading researchers in the fields covered.

The journal contains both short and long original papers. Special issues are planned on selected topics. High-quality paper allows good reproduction of photomicrographs and the text is easy to read. The time from submission to acceptance is between one and five months, with a further one to five months between acceptance and publication. There are about five papers in each issue, and the articles are accessible electronically.

Most of the articles published so far could have appeared in other journals available in the field of audition. The success of this new periodical will therefore depend on its ability to bring together a mix of information not available elsewhere. □

S. M. Khanna is in the Department of Otolaryngology, Fowler Memorial Laboratory, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, New York, New York 10032, USA.

Brain terrain

NeuroImage: A Journal of Brain Function

Editors-in-chief Arthur W. Toga, Richard S. J. Frackowiak and John C. Mazziotta
Academic. 8/yr. USA and Canada \$300, elsewhere \$322 (institutional); \$99 (personal)

Jonathan D. Cohen

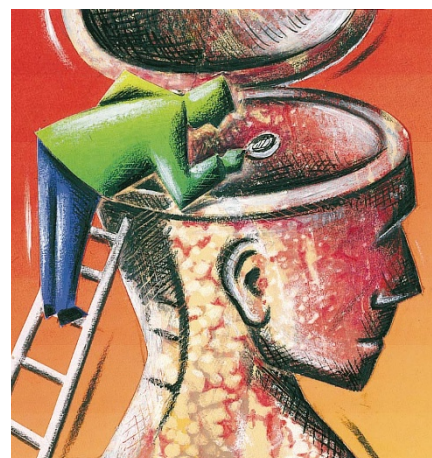
I recently saw the words 'image is everything' emblazoned on a T-shirt beside an image of the brain. It aroused mixed feelings. I certainly shared the wearer's pride about an exciting area of research in which I participate. At the same time, it piqued my concern about over-promotion, especially in comparison with other exciting and important areas of cognitive and neuroscientific research.

It is a fact, however, that neuroimaging is growing tremendously and receiving much attention. This is due largely to remarkable advances in noninvasive techniques for imaging human brain function, including positron emission tomography, functional magnetic resonance imaging, scalp electro-physiology and other less common but promising techniques, such as magneto-encephalography and optical imaging. Collectively, these techniques offer an unprecedented opportunity to observe the functioning of the normal human brain.

NeuroImage is one of two journals created in response to this growth (the other is *Human Brain Mapping*, reviewed two years ago in *Nature* 377, 266; 1995). These journals perform an important service. Before they appeared, most neuroimaging studies went to technique-specific disciplinary journals. But these studies address many of the same basic questions about brain function, and face many of the same methodological issues. Hence the need for a common forum that not only permits the direct exchange of findings and ideas, but might also aid the development of new, integrative approaches.

Of the two new journals, *NeuroImage* has a broader mission, targeting studies not only on humans but also on other animals. This breadth of coverage is important, as it has the potential to foster additional interactions across these two largely isolated areas of research. Although fewer nonhuman studies have appeared (accounting for about 20 per cent of articles in the ten issues I sampled), they are an important and distinguishing characteristic of the journal.

The journal has kept apace of growth in the field. It recently increased from six to eight issues a year, and acquired two extra editors to redirect its focus. The time from submission to publication is about seven months — quick enough to ensure timeliness without sacrificing a careful review process. This care is reflected in the high



MARK DOBSON

quality of the articles, which include contributions from established investigators and newcomers to the field alike.

The format is primarily full-length research articles. Rapid communications are welcomed, although there have been only a handful published so far. There is a good balance between methodological articles (55 per cent) and ones focusing on empirical research (45 per cent). The cost is reasonable, especially considering the superb standard of production and the fact that authors are not charged for colour figures.

In all, *NeuroImage* seems to be succeeding in its mission. Owing to the current popularity of the topic, it faces stiff competition from the main disciplinary and general scientific journals, as well as, of course, from *Human Brain Mapping*. But it is clearly rising to the challenge. In view of the area's rapid growth, *NeuroImage* should not have trouble continuing to attract interesting and important articles.

Is image everything? I don't think so. But *NeuroImage* encompasses everything in brain imaging, and is doing an excellent job of providing a high-resolution image of this cutting-edge and burgeoning field. □

Jonathan D. Cohen is in the Department of Psychology, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213, USA.

Lateral thinking

Laterality

Editors Michael Corballis, Chris McManus and Michael Peters

Psychology Press. 4/yr. UK £64, elsewhere \$105 (institutional); UK £30, elsewhere £55 (personal)

Dale Purves and Leonard E. White

Since Broca, Wernicke and other pioneering nineteenth-century neurologists first demonstrated that some brain functions are lateralized, interest in this phenomenon has grown progressively. The field was given enormous impetus in this century by Roger Sperry, whose work with split-brain patients