

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. □

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## 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. □

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## 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**

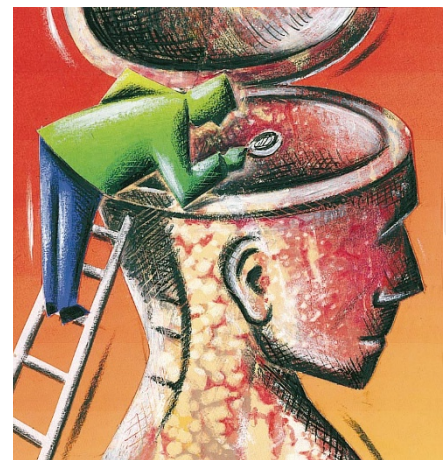
I recently saw the words 'image is everything' emblazoned on a T-shirt beside an image of the brain. It aroused mixed feelings. I certainly shared the wearer's pride about an exciting area of research in which I participate. At the same time, it piqued my concern about over-promotion, especially in comparison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

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## 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

began to parse more precisely the functions carried out by the right and left cerebral hemispheres. More recently, the advent of functional neuroimaging has raised these endeavours to an even more sophisticated technical level. All this explains the rationale for a new publication devoted to lateralized neural functions; there is certainly plenty of grist for the mill.

The key problems confronting such a journal are which of the many facets of laterality to encompass and how to avoid the 'pop' psychology that has always bedevilled this field. Although the papers, commentaries and book reviews in the first several issues of *Laterality* run the gamut, the balance happily favours the phenomenology of laterality and speculations about its neurobiological underpinnings, rather than clinical investigations (which already enjoy other forums).

This inclination is reflected in the small format of the journal (which precludes the large glossy figures that are now routine for imaging studies), and in the editorial board, many of whom have worked and written about laterality from a broad biological perspective. So *Laterality* will provide lively and welcome reading for those interested in mulling over how and why the left and right halves of mammalian brains are different. □

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## Green shoots

### Trends in Plant Sciences

Editor Hugh Blackbourn  
Elsevier. 12/yr. NFI1,113, \$687  
(institutional); NFI214, \$132 (personal);  
NFI107, \$66 (students)

### Axel Brennicke

Launched in January 1996 as the latest addition to Elsevier's Trends series, this eagerly awaited journal not only closes a gap in the publisher's list but, more importantly, also fills a niche for timely reviews of rapidly evolving fields in plant research.

Although early issues seem somewhat crudely cobbled together, later ones look more professional, with articles well on their way to matching the standards set by the other *Trends* journals. There are reviews and short research news articles reporting interesting observations, as well as an update section on new books, software, techniques and Internet services and a perspectives section carrying opinions and essays.

The scope is ambitious, embracing all of plant science. One might come across pieces on evolutionary relationships or transgenic farming; a new system for distinguishing differences between inconspicuous small yellow flowers; a table of gene names; curves showing concentrations of various chemical reagents; or photographs of the drainage system in a tree. Most reviews cover fashionable areas of modern plant research — subjects that attract both researchers and students and which, consequently, are yielding most of the novelties and so are particularly useful in updating lectures conceived years ago.

I do think the journal fills a gap. Occasionally, special reviews and summaries on plants appear in such periodicals as *Plant Molecular Biology*, *Plant Physiology*, *Plant Science* and *Physiologia Plantarum*; and, from time to time, the most competent of these even become widely cited. The reviews in the new *Trends* journal are similarly competent and trustworthy, covering their subfield more or less objectively and comprehensively. One can take the information at face value without having to decide what may be important and what not.

A single issue of almost any other plant journal would cost more than the yearly (personal) subscription to *Trends in Plant Sciences*. Indeed, the price is so attractive that I have already become a customer. The journal has proved to be a handy reference library for information not readily gathered from original articles, saving me much time, money and photocopying. But the library price is a different matter — my university, for one, cannot afford it. □

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## On the move

### Global Change Biology

Editor-in-chief Steve Long  
Blackwell Science. 6/yr. USA and Canada  
\$530, Europe £290, elsewhere £319  
(institutional); USA and Canada \$110,  
Europe £60, elsewhere £66 (personal)

### Peter D. Moore

The old army adage that if an object remains static you paint it and if it moves you salute it may well contain a lesson for modern environmental biologists.

For a long time the only biologists really concerned with change were palaeontologists, and their concept of pace was hardly sprightly. Most biologists were satisfied with painting static pictures of the living world. But in the past few decades all this has been turned on its head and global change has become a central issue in much biological research.

*Global Change Biology* has set itself up as a platform for the publication of a diverse assemblage of papers that have as a common theme the influence of human-induced climatic, chemical and biological environmental changes on the biochemistry, physiology, demography or behaviour of individual species or entire ecosystems. This is a wide brief and it is not surprising that an eclectic array of papers has appeared in the journal over the past two years.

The direct effects of raised atmospheric carbon dioxide levels on plant growth, soil microbial interactions (hence nitrogen cycling) and plant-animal interactions, together with the modelling and balancing of global carbon budgets, have been particularly prominent as topics for publication and seem to form the central focus of the journal.

Other topics, including the effects of enhanced ultraviolet-B radiation and raised levels of sulphur dioxide, are also found here.

All these topics could find their way into a range of other journals, but what is distinctive about this one is that plants and animals, terrestrial and marine studies, atmospheric and limnological topics are all located between the same covers. The very breadth of the journal may be dangerous as far as finding a niche in the marketplace is concerned, and its best hope of success may well involve the production of issues devoted to specific areas, such as one on coral reef changes which contained seven papers on different aspects.

Both environmental biological research and *Global Change Biology* are evidently on the move, so a salute is clearly in order. □

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