

# Training Matters in neurology

John W Griffin

Does neurology attract particular personality types? This widely held suspicion got some empiric—if anecdotal—evidence from an experience in the Department of Neurology at Johns Hopkins a few years ago. The Myers–Briggs Personality Inventory was administered to nearly 100 neurologists in the faculty, with the hope that identifying particular personality features of individuals might be helpful in their practices. A psychologist then came to the annual neurology retreat to interpret the results. He began by saying, “I’ve never seen anything like this. Almost all of you are clustered in one personality category.” He described us as having the characteristics of highly analytical, organized, somewhat introverted intellectuals. When asked what this meant, he replied, “Well, I’m sure you get along well with each other, but I wouldn’t want to go to a party with you. You don’t tolerate uncertainty well, but you like to exchange ideas. You especially enjoy learning and teaching.”

Now, I would argue that neurologists are in fact an unusually fun group, but the psychologist’s conclusion does fit with our reputation for wanting to understand disease mechanisms, a desire that has been and will continue to be well represented in this journal. It also supports the special orientation of neurologists toward teaching. With this in mind, *Nature Clinical Practice Neurology* will shortly introduce a regular feature—entitled ‘Training Matters’—that will focus specifically on educational issues. Education at all levels—predoctoral, graduate and postgraduate—is undergoing re-evaluation throughout the world, making such issues particularly timely and of special interest. In the clinic, the increasing pressures on practice, often including regulatory pressures and paperwork, can erode education. Similarly, in academic settings, education can be displaced by the demands of research activities. In many medical schools and hospitals,

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realization of these facts has led to a resurgence of interest in academic rewards for outstanding teaching. Most journals, however, rarely explore the subjects of innovation and best practice in education.

The Training Matters section will have an international focus, and the contrasts in neurological training between different countries will be explored. Some of these geographical differences in education reflect the different ways in which neurologists are used. For example, in the US they are usually viewed as principal caregivers for neurological diseases, whereas in Canada, the UK and much of Europe, neurology is often a more consultative specialty. Some differences in education reflect longstanding national traditions, whereas others reflect recent reforms.

We will identify advisors for the Training Matters section who reflect the international scope of the topic, and we plan to solicit pieces by trainees as well as by trainers. The range of possible topics is broad. Examples could include the following: are students learning what they will need to know? Are the recent reforms in graduate training positive or negative? How heavily dictated should graduate training be? Can training be made flexible for individuals with specific career paths? How should psychiatry, neurosurgery and radiology be taught to neurologists? What are the implications of the growing separation of neurology from internal medicine? How should post-residency training be integrated with residency? We welcome ideas for articles; more information on submitting a suggestion can be found in the ‘Aims and Scope’ section of our journal website ([http://www.nature.com/ncpneuro/about\\_journal/aims\\_scope.html](http://www.nature.com/ncpneuro/about_journal/aims_scope.html)). By identifying the most-timely topics and the best authors, you can help us to make Training Matters an unparalleled resource for neurology trainers and trainees alike.