EDITORIAL

Mapping the Future of Neuro-Oncology

W.K. Alfred Yung, Editor in chief

C. David James, Co-Editor in chief

Taking on a successful journal and trying to find ways to improve it is something like adding an agent to an effective chemotherapy regimen: How do you balance the improvements you can attain against the risk of harm you may inadvertently do?

As the new editor and co-editor of Neuro-Oncology, we are delighted (and a bit overwhelmed) to have in our hands the premier journal in the field—a journal whose impact score reflects top-tier performance even among the highly regarded general oncology periodicals. We owe a great debt of thanks to Founding Editor Darell D. Bigner, our friend and colleague, for his inestimable contributions to the success of Neuro-Oncology and his continued contributions as a trusted advisor and critic. Not only has he built Neuro-Oncology from the ground up, but he has also secured the support of the Society for Neuro-Oncology, the Japan Society for Neuro-Oncology, the European Association for Neuro-Oncology, and the World Federation of Neuro-Oncology Societies to help create a truly global publication. His early vision for this journal was (and still is) shared by the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation of the United States, whose initial grant created the journal and whose continued support still plays a vital role in its operations.

Contributors, Readers Make the Journal

We are mindful, too, of the support we receive from the many contributors to this journal—the authors, readers, reviewers, and overseas editors who are responsible for ensuring that Neuro-Oncology is the must-read journal in its field. You are the lifeblood of this journal, for without contributors and readers, we would have no one with whom to share knowledge. Neuro-Oncology is nothing more nor less than a medium, a communications tool linking researchers and practitioners with their peers around the world. And we know that its content must remain interesting, informative, and influential to fulfill that role.

Therefore, when we came onboard, one of the first things we wanted to know was who you are and what you want from this journal. Some of you may recall being invited to participate in an online survey. More than 200 of you answered that call, and your input is helping to inform our plans for the next several years of publication.

A full half of our readers are neuro-oncologists proper, with another 19% neurosurgeons. But other fields are well represented, too: basic science (14%), pediatrics (10%), radiation oncology (8%), pathology (8%), neurology (7%) ... even a sprinkling of biostatisticians, nurses, and psychologists are among our readers. Despite this diversity, 90% of you report always or frequently reading Neuro-Oncology, and we proudly note that the next top two vote-getters in this category were the Journal of Clinical Oncology and Cancer Research—big guns in the larger oncology community rather than our direct competitors in this specialty area. That tells us that you value our overall quality and rate it very highly. We are determined to maintain that quality and improve it, if we can.

Changes to Reflect Your Priorities

Your responses will also inform any changes we make moving forward. For instance, 84% of you indicated that you would like to see some issues or supplements on special topics, and many of you offered several suggestions for the same. If possible, we hope to settle on one of these topics and put together a focused publication this year. We also plan to increase the number of review articles we publish each year, and we will be inviting prominent authorities to give us their unique perspectives on the most important issues in neuro-oncology today.

Because you enjoy the news section, the mix of articles published, and the preview of contents we give on the cover, we are retaining those items. However, we will enhance all of them so that they are bolder, more informative, and more reflective of the vibrant and rapid pace of change we all face as practitioners and investigators in this field. You can already see some of these plans in action, with our redesigned cover, which uses bolder graphics, more color, and text that highlights specific content to (we hope) pique your interest about the pages inside. We are also encouraged by your stated desire to see the journal more often, and we tentatively plan to move to bimonthly frequency (six issues per year) beginning in 2008.

As you can no doubt tell, our first few months as editor and co-editor of this journal have been exhilarating. And we are confident that with your help, we can...
achieve our goals (and yours) to keep Neuro-Oncology on its upward trajectory. Thank you in advance for your contributions, feedback, and loyalty.

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PS: We are actively seeking neuro-oncology-related color photos for upcoming journal covers; these need not be tied to specific article submissions. If you have a dramatic image that you would like us to consider, please contact Managing Editor Kathryn Carnes at neurooncology@mdanderson.org.