



Welcome to the Volume 25 and its double issue 1/2 of the *Neuroendocrinology Letters* (NEL).

First of all, please accept my best wishes for a very successful and happy new year 2004 and also my deep gratitude to all of you – coworkers and readers – for your consistent and faithful cooperation with me.

Some words about our Editorial Board. I would like to introduce you to some new distinguished Members, but before I do that I would like to make some comments on the current constitution and the size of the Board and its further possible development. This journal has successively developed during the last seven years towards a large international and interdisciplinary forum for science and art with a very clear message of integrative approach to and between the various fields covered by the NEL. This policy has been very fruitful and I am very happy that I have run and edited this journal in this direction. This character of the NEL brings with it a need of a large number of coworkers within the editorial board who represent this international, multidisciplinary and integrative profile.

The old and the new Members of the Board have been carefully chosen and I am very proud and grateful for the fact that no one whom I have invited to the Board during these last seven years, since I took the position of Editor-in-Chief, has declined my invitation, in spite of the well known knowledge that you always can decline even most illustrious invitations and proposals if you don't want to accept them, and you still can do that in a very polite and understandable way. Thanks God, it never happened to me – and this has proved, that every single, by me invited distinguished member of the Board, is of enormous value to this journal, and there is no one among the members of the Board without whom I could have achieved this tremendous and successful development we have experienced with the NEL during those seven years. Achievements, visible through inclusion of this journal to all significant databases and Medline, through the rating and coverage, through the increasing impact factor and acknowledgement of the NEL within the international scientific community. *Neuroendocrinology Letters* became a recommended literature in many renown universities around the world.

There are also invisible achievements, which are not less important than the visible ones. There is a significant number of authors who through their diligence and quality of their work, have achieved – thanks to publishing in the NEL – academic positions within their universities and institutions, beginning with PhD's up to appointments as associated and full Professors. We have been encouraging young and promising scientists enabling them to publish in the NEL, and a significant number of very successful scientists started their scientific publications on the pages of this journal.

And last, but not least, the invisible pleasure which was experienced by many colleagues while reading the *Neuroendocrinology Letters* at home after a long working day, giving them delight and intellectual and spiritual inspiration.

Before I go further and introduce you to the new members of the Board, I would like to announce a new policy, which I intend to develop together with the members of the Board in the near future. It is obvious, that in spite of what I have said above, there must be a healthy circulation within the Board. It would be utmost graceless, awkward, unpolished, and indeed, not very intelligent, to take farewell from any member of the Board, who has been with me during those years. Nobody

was or is dispensable, and I owe each and every one a deep gratitude, sincere respect and gratefulness. But it may be wise to divide the Board to a smaller, more operative Editorial Board and a larger Advisory Board, in which way the burden and responsibility could be of greater variation and differentiation.

Having said that, I feel utmost honored by a great privilege, which was graciously granted to me by accepting my invitation to join the Editorial Board of the *Neuroendocrinology Letters* as from January 2004 from most illustrious and distinguished colleagues for the following positions:

As the new Honorary Editor of the NEL I cordially welcome *Professor Jan Štencl, M.D., Ph.D.*, the long-standing Director of Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, at the Derer's University Hospital in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, which was for years the most important teaching Hospital for postgraduate studies and qualifications of Slovak physicians, and which institution Professor Štencl has developed to a most qualifying and distinguished body within the European teaching system. He has recently succeeded with a most significant step in the new direction of postgraduate teaching of medical personnel, physicians, nurses and midwives, in upgrading the postgraduate institute to a Medical University, for which University he became its first Rector. In this position he is able to materialize his vision of the modern, new training and education programs for doctors of all disciplines, in all postgraduate studies, and so enable them the highest possible grade within the medical praxis. The future chiefs of various medical clinics and institutions will be the graduates from Professor Štencl's university. Professor Štencl with his personality, his skills and deep knowledge is a firm garant for the best possible result of these endeavors. I am very proud to have gained his trust and for his acceptance of position as Honorary Editor of the NEL.

The next new member of the Board of Honorary Editors is *Professor Raphael Mechoulam, Ph.D.*, who is the Head of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Natural products at the Faculty of Medicine at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. With his kind acceptance to serve on the Board he fills a very important gap by contributing the knowledge of his field to the *Neuroendocrinology Letters*. In this issue he has introduced a very important chapter on cannabis and cannabinoids – the medical history, pharmacology and therapy. We have together with him and his close co-worker *Ester Fride* invited very distinguished researchers in this field, and presented in this issue a block on this topic, coordinated by *Dr. Ruediger Lorenz*.

Professor Marek Pawlikowski, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the Institute of Endocrinology at the Medical University of Lodz in Poland, is well known to all readers of this journal and to the scientific community worldwide. He has graciously accepted to take the position of Honorary Editor having been the member of the Board of Editors for many years.

As a new Consulting Editor, beside *Dr. Ludwig Janus* – the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Medicine* – who has kindly served in this position since 1997, I invited *Dr. Alojz Kocinger*, who graciously accepted my invitation. You may read more about *Dr. Kocinger* on the page 148 in this issue.

To the Board of Associate Editors I have invited three new members:

Professor Richard Rokyta, M.D., DrSc., Head of the Department for Normal, Pathological and Clinical Physiology at the 3rd Faculty of Medicine at the Charles University in Prague, who has been a long-standing member of the Editorial Board of NEL and who contributed to this journal with the most valuable scientific papers, and who also was of great importance to me with his consistent and active support. He also is the Editor-in-Chief of a journal on pain, edited and published in Czech language with English abstracts, which belongs to one of the most important journals in this field world wide. He has been a long standing member of the Editorial Board of "*Physiological Research*", formerly "*Psysiologia Bohemoslovaca*", a most distinguished journal pub-

lished by the Institute of Physiology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, a journal of high international esteem and of high ranking. It is worth to mention, that another member of the Editorial Board of the journal of "*Physiological Research*", Professor *Branislav Lichardus* is one of the Honorary Editors of the *Neuroendocrinology Letters*.

The next new Associate Editor I would like to welcome, is **Andrej Reiner**, M.D., Ph.D. He is President of the Association of the Drugs and Health Devices Suppliers in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, and will be an important link between this journal and the pharmaceutical companies, their research and development programs.

The third new member of the Board of Associate Editors is *Professor Yvan Touitou*, Ph.D., the Head of Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the Faculty of Medicine Pitié-Salpêtrière, Paris, France. He contributed to this journal with the topic of circadian endocrine rhythms and will be of essential importance to this journal in widening its scope with his research and will promote the French scientific inclusion to the NEL together with Professor *Rokyta*.

The Board of Editors of the NEL was enlarged with following members:

Elvidina Adamson-Macedo, Ph.D., Chartered Health Psychologist, AFBPsS University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom, who has contributed with most innovative research to the NEL since 1997. For her pioneering work within the neonatal psychoneuroimmunology she received in year 2000 the prestigious Derek Gupta Prize, founded by *Neuroendocrinology Letters* in 1998, as the first recipient of this Prize. A representative selection of papers from this field will be published in the spring 2004 as a Supplement to the *Neuroendocrinology Letters*. Dr. Adamson serves on the Board of Associate Editors of the *International Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Medicine*.

Daniel Alexander, M.D., from the Center of Assisted Reproduction, ISCARE, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, who will cover the field of Reproductive Medicine – one of the fields included in the scope of the *Neuroendocrinology Letters*.

Professor Antonín Doležal, M.D., Ph.D., DrSc., from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology from the 1st Medical Faculty, Charles University Prague. About Professor Doležal you will read more in this issue of the NEL in connection with the Laudatio to his 75th birthday and his outstanding work as the author of innovative research within the field of obstetrics, in which he is one of the most esteemed representatives.

Professor Ester Fridé, Ph.D., Chair of the Departments of Behavioural Sciences and Molecular Biology at the College of Judea and Samaria, Ariel, Israel. She also is a member of the Editorial Board of the *European Journal of Pharmacology*. Ester Fridé is a close co-worker to Professor Mechoulam, and has substantially contributed to the block of cannabis and cannabinoids in this issue.

Docent Karel Jelen, Ph.D., from the Department of Anatomy and Biomechanics, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Charles University in Prague, has through his integrative studies essentially enriched this journal and contributed to the NEL in Vol. 24, Nos. 1/2 and in this issue with this new and most appreciated field of research.

Professor Stefan Lukacín, M.D., Ph.D., Head of the 1st Gynaecology Department, Faculty Hospital, Kosice, Slovak Republic. Professor Lukacín has with his research and pedagogic work contributed to the deeper understanding of the role of neuroendocrinology and psychoneuroimmunology within practice of obstetrics and gynecology, not only in his country but also on the larger European scale.

Professor Stanisław Radowicki, M.D., Ph.D., Director of Department of Gynecological Endocrinology, Medical Academy, Warsaw, Poland, who supported and promoted this journal for many years.

The relevant enlargement of the Editorial Board of our second Journal – *the International Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Medicine* can be seen on the separate page in this current issue.

THE CANNABIS AND CANNABINOID block in this issue is dealing with pharmacology, toxicology, and the therapeutic application of cannabis and cannabinoids – a very important contribution to this journal. I agree with the comments of *Vincenzo Di Marzo*, Ph.D., from the Institute of Chemistry and Molecular Biology in Pozzuoli, Italy, who in his review of the book entitled “Cannabis and Cannabinoids” (announced on page 49 in this issue), edited by *Franjo Grotenhermen*, Germany and *Ethan Russo*, USA, wrote: “At last a book that presents an objective as well as clear and rather comprehensive description of the state of the art of medicinal cannabis ... This is a great achievement considering the fact that many social implications, as well as opposing political credos, have often masked the truth in this important issue ... The book is well written in all its chapters and would be particularly suitable to students in medicine, basic and clinical pharmacology and pharmaceutical chemistry”. I have chosen to include this block in this issue of the NEL as an important contribution within the sciences of neuroendocrinology, psychoneuroimmunology and allied and applied fields. I feel very much indebted to all the authors of that block.

In the next part of my editorial let me please thank most cordially all the authors, who contributed to this issue of NEL with their most valuable, innovative and highly scientific work. Unfortunately, due to lack of the space, I cannot go into the details of each and every paper and author. I am sure the authors will understand that. The high quality of their papers will talk for itself. I thank all the authors most cordially.

I would like to sincerely apologize to one of the authors, *Dr. Bogdan Lewczuk*, who's paper was omitted from publishing on the cover due to technical reasons. However, it will not diminish the quality and importance of his published paper in this issue.

Additionally, I would like to mention that in the future we will avoid the publication of double issues, and will continue with the single issues only. You may follow our Editorial program on our website, www.nel.edu under the section Preview and the Latest from the Office of the Editor-in-Chief.

The **Subject and Author Index 2003** as well as the **Instructions for the Authors 2004** will be published on our website.

Closing this Editorial, I would like to express my great pleasure and satisfaction with the fact that the daily number of visitors on our website is steadily increasing, showing the raising interest world wide in the papers published in the *Neuroendocrinology Letters*.

I would like to encourage all of you to contribute with your scientific work for the publication in the *Neuroendocrinology Letters*. Your work will always be met with appreciation and friendly attitude.

With most cordial regards and very best wishes,

Peter G. Fedor-Freybergh
Editor-in-Chief: Neuroendocrinology Letters