

Editorial

CONRAD H. SCHNEIDER, Editor-in-Chief

DIETRICH BRANDENBURG, Chairman, European Peptide Society

We are happy to be able to present this first issue of the *Journal of Peptide Science* which is going to be the European Peptide Society's scientific Journal jointly owned by the Society and the publisher John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. The first volume comprising six bi-monthly issues will appear in 1995 but we are proud that it was possible to make available the present 'Number One' during the 23rd European Peptide Symposium at Braga. Thanks are due here to our authors who had to cope with certain deadlines.

Naturally, the present milestone was not reached on a smooth path. This is hardly the place to give a historical account of the long discussions and of the considerable preliminary activities that were required before actual work could get started, but two points should be worth mentioning. In the early discussion the question was raised and not unexpectedly so, whether the new Journal would indeed be necessary given the large number of scientific journals already available. And related to this, the statement was made that most published papers are never cited in the literature such that our ways of publishing need to be reconsidered in the near future. These points are not to be treated lightly but we can only discuss them shortly.

Since the early 1960s the field of peptide science has been expanding at an unbelievable rate and a variety of new techniques and concepts have brought enrichment but also difficulties in keeping track. Furthermore, some parallel brilliant developments in fields such as molecular biology, genetics or immunology have brought peptides into focus for many colleagues from neighbouring fields. From the early days when du Vigneaud's group used classical organic synthesis to prepare the first biologically active peptide hormones, there was a strong link between synthetic structures and biological effects, and the Nobel Prize awarded to this work certainly took into account the biological implications.

Presently, the peptide chain encourages many more links and, should we say, chains together such diverse fields as crystallography, physical chemistry and organic chemistry on one hand and pharmacology, endocrinology, biochemistry and immunology on the other. This vast expansion is well reflected in the programmes of the bi-annual European Peptide Symposia. These meetings were, from the first Symposium 1958 in Prague to the 19th in Greece (1986), 'family meetings' of peptide experts with restricted access. Now, they attract over 1000 participants coming from many disciplines. It proved necessary and practical to establish the European Peptide Society to secure future Symposia and facilitate communication. With now more than 1000 members in European countries and close relationships to the American and Japanese Peptide Societies, the EPS represents peptide science in Europe. It thus was just a logical step further to create an official journal as a common platform for international, multidisciplinary scientific exchange.

We took into account that the Proceedings volumes of the European, American and Japanese Peptide Symposia offer broad, but very condensed information, that only a few journals emphasized peptide science, and that the multidisciplinary nature of many papers leads to wide scattering of relevant papers in the literature. Meanwhile 'Letter-type' journals have also been announced. While rapid short communications are certainly important, the principle that publications should contain sufficient experimental details to permit the repetition of the experiments is a predominant guideline, particularly in peptide science. So, publication of full papers, supplemented by important other information in the field is a major goal and it is a strong motivation for our Journal that the scientists from the various disciplines can find a common forum and hopefully a language understood by all.

In the 'Aims and Scope' of the Journal we have used the formulation: 'Generally, all topics pre-

sented at the European Peptide Symposia are considered for publication'. This should be clear enough to all concerned. For the sake of clarity it should be added that the Journal is of course open to all qualified scientists who need be neither members of the European Peptide Society nor Europeans at all.

We should then not forget that peptides are not only those chains composed of the 20 amino acids used in ribosomal synthesis; the 'exotic' structures found for instance in fungi and other 'lower forms' of life and which may pose considerable synthetic difficulties are also included. In order to emphasize this aspect we use as our cover illustration the X-ray structure of ascidiacyclamide, a cytotoxic peptide from the marine organism *ascidian*. The graphical design was proposed and made available by R. Floegel, Institute of Organic Chemistry, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, based on a publication of T. Ishida, M. Tanaka, M. Nabae and M. Inoue (*J. Org. Chem.* 53, 107–112 [1988]). We are very grateful to both Dr Ishida and coworkers and Dr Floegel for their contributions.

To come to the second point to be discussed: there is indeed some statistical evidence that only a small percentage of all papers published are ever cited. To

conclude from this observation that publishing is to a large extent futile, as the critics and pessimists do, is certainly wrong. It is probably true that most of us read a lot of scientific reports and do not cite most of what is read. But then we do not read in order to cite. We read in order to stay informed, and to enable ourselves to contribute significant and timely work; to do that we need indeed a lot of reading. It is our great hope that the new Journal will become a valuable source of such reading. Of course, we also hope that articles related to new work will be cited in the appropriate publications. This is not forbidden, it is in fact expected and requested (cf. also Publishing Policy of the Journal of Peptide Science).

Time will tell to what extent the *Journal of Peptide Science* succeeds in serving the international community of peptide scientists and colleagues of neighbouring fields. The publisher, the executive committee of the European Peptide Society, all the Editors and the members of the Advisory Board are dedicated to the goal that the *Journal of Peptide Science* will become a high-quality journal worthy of your support. It is clear, however, that ultimately success depends on you – the authors, reviewers and readers of our Journal.