

Editorial

Finding our niche

June 7, 2006

Editorial

Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior is changing again. In the past 10 years under the scholarly guidance of Dr. Sandra File and Dr. George Koob, the journal has risen to a new level of scientific rigor. There have been significant improvements in both the scientific quality of articles published, and the mechanics and speed of the publication process through the efforts of both editorial offices and the production staff at Elsevier. Dr. File retired in 2004 after many years of outstanding service to the journal, and we welcomed Dr. Dai Stephens as European Editor, joining Dr. Koob who remains as Editor for North and South America, Asia, Australia, and Africa. Dr. Stephens' appointment maintains the journal's expertise across the wide range of behavioral neuroscience and psychopharmacology, and together the editors are well qualified to rise to the challenges of new developments in the neuropharmacology of behavior. We are particularly excited about the rapid developments in genomics, and in the use of more sophisticated theoretical analysis of behavioral psychology that will strengthen *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* further.

Although we are changing, it is important to stress that the core goals and mission of *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* remain constant. We are a journal that publishes studies of the neuropharmacological mechanisms of behavior, in the broad sense, that adhere to solid experimental design principles. Our aim is rapid but rigorous and scholarly peer-reviewed publication of such articles. To accomplish these goals, a number of changes already have been implemented by the journal.

First, we are delighted to announce a new initiative already implemented whereby authors now are given the opportunity to receive a PDF file of their article via e-mail instead of the usual 25 free paper offprints, if they so wish. The pdf file is a watermarked version of the published article and includes a coversheet with the journal cover image and a disclaimer outlining the terms and conditions of use. We have received very positive feedback from authors, and all are pleased this choice now is available to them.

Second, with regard to scientific rigor, studies without an explicit behavioral dependent variable or independent variable are no longer considered. Papers on pure toxicology also are not considered, but will be referred to more specialized Elsevier journals. In addition, while *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* has encouraged papers in the area of pharmacognosy (i.e., study of the pharmacological activity of plants, plant products, and herbal preparations), our new policy is that only such papers with a clearly identified and definitive active ingredient and/or mechanism of action will be considered. Papers not meeting these minimal criteria, or noted to be lacking in rigorous experimental design, will be declined for further consideration at the editorial level prior to peer-review.

Third, several significant changes in the mechanics of editorial review and the publication process have positively impacted *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* over the past 5 years. Electronic submission and review procedures via the Elsevier Editorial System (EES) have been implemented with tremendous success. Notably, the time to first decision after initial submission, as well as the time to publication after acceptance, has been significantly shortened, and this has been possible in a time when the number of submissions to the journal have increased nearly two-fold over the past 3 years.

It is reassuring to us that our authors have noted these positive changes and have reacted favorably, with high ratings of satisfaction in the processing of manuscripts, the rigor and scientific quality of the review process, and the speed of publication after acceptance. The impact factor for *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* has shown improvement over the past decade, providing quantitative support for the positive effects produced by the changes to editorial policy and manuscript processing.

In looking to the future, we see a key role for *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* in continuing to publish articles within the scientific domains for which we are already a journal of choice, but also expanding our coverage of the burgeoning area linking molecular genetic changes to behavioral phenotypes and the resulting development of novel neuropharmacological probes for novel targets. We

would like to encourage our colleagues and readers to submit papers of high quality within such domains. We believe that our active efforts and firm commitment to continuously improving and refining our high quality peer-review and publication process will serve to further enhance authors' impressions of *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* as a

particularly attractive venue for publications in the field of neuropharmacology of behavior.

We hope that you share our vision and choose to join us.

Dai N. Stephens and George F. Koob
Editors-in-Chief