

Promise of RI

David A. Clark

American Journal of Reproductive Immunology. Editor N. Gleicher. 8/yr in 2 vols. (Alan R. Liss.) \$90 US, \$112 Europe.

GROWING interest in immunology as applied to reproduction has spawned two new international journals in the past few years — first the *Journal of Reproductive Immunology* (reviewed in *Nature* 293, 357; 1981) and now the *American Journal of Reproductive Immunology* (AJRI).

The objective of AJRI is to concentrate the literature of reproductive immunology, now scattered widely, into a single publication. Many of the articles appearing in the AJRI have a clinical orientation, and thus this journal may be viewed as complementary to the *Journal of Reproductive Immunology* which focuses on the basic scientific issues in reproductive immunology. The editor promises quick reviews with notice of decision within 6 weeks of submission and rapid publication of acceptable articles. Such ideals are difficult to achieve and I calculated the median time (\pm SD) to acceptance from a sample of 19 peer-reviewed articles to be 8.9 \pm 2.2 weeks with a median time from submission to publication of 7.4 \pm 1.5 months.

The scope of the journal is unusually

broad and includes pregnancy immunology, fertility immunology, developmental immunology and "reproductive tumor immunology". Several papers in the last two categories which appeared in early issues of AJRI seemed more suited for general cellular immunology or tumour biology journals, but most papers in recent issues do appear to be more relevant.

Other features include editorials, methods papers, short communications, invited reviews and "Hypotheses". A forum for discussion is provided by letters to the editor and, in one instance, a controversial article was published together with the signed reports of referees and the authors' rebuttals — an innovation that might profitably be considered by other journals. Another unusual feature is the regular publication of a list of successful NICHD grant applicants, together with amount awarded and an abstract of the grant proposal.

The technical quality of the publication is excellent and the scientific standard of the papers, initially mediocre in some instances, has improved substantially in recent issues. AJRI has a long way to go, but the journal does show promise of providing a quality forum for new work in reproductive immunology. □

David Clark is an Associate Professor of Medicine at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

Take the strain

Colin J. Barnstable

Journal of Neuroimmunology. Editors-in-chief C.S. Raine and P.O. Behan. 6/yr in 2 vols. (Elsevier Biomedical.) Dfl. 450, \$180.

THE new *Journal of Neuroimmunology* (JN) is trying to provide a meeting point for neuropathologists and those who use immunological methods as a tool to study the nervous system. Obviously, all knowledge of the nervous system is relevant to a neuroscientist; but how much does someone working on cell-type specific markers of mouse cerebellar cells *in vitro* (Vol. 1, No.4) have in common with someone working on the distribution of factor B(Bf) allotypes in multiple sclerosis (Vol. 1, No.1)?

Separately, the two target groups of this journal are already well served. There are many neuropathology journals, such as the *Journal of Neuropathology*, whose interests and contents encompass those of JN. Equally, neuroscientists who use immunological methods have a variety of cell and developmental biology journals, as well as several neuroscience journals such as *Brain Research*, *Journal of Neuroscience* and *Journal of Neurochemistry*.

This diversity of journals is as it should be since it is the problem tackled that is important, not the method used.

Although I do not see any particular need for this newcomer, a number of the papers in the first few issues are solid and competent. However since many of them are by the editors, as is often the case for new journals, it is still difficult to judge what the overall quality will be.

The journal is settling down at about six or seven papers in each of the four issues per year. This works out at \$3 per paper, which is more expensive than many equivalent journals. In compensation the quality of the presentation, notably of the electron micrographs, is very good. The delay between receipt and acceptance has varied between 1 day and 5½ months; that between acceptance and publication is about 6 months, although I detect signs of increasing delay in recent issues.

If there is a group of "neuro-immunologists" just waiting to submit high-quality papers to this journal — and take out subscriptions — its future is assured. If not then I hope it will not linger and further strain our already desperate library finances. □

Colin Barnstable is in the Department of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts.

Strong nerves

Richard J. Miller

The Journal of Neuroscience. Editor-in-chief W.M. Cowan. 12/yr. (Williams & Wilkins.) \$80 US, \$100 elsewhere (personal); \$230 US, \$250 elsewhere (institutional). *Cellular and Molecular Neurobiology*. Editor D.O. Carpenter. 4/yr. (Plenum.) \$25 US, \$30 elsewhere (personal); \$50 US, \$57 elsewhere (institutional).

NOWADAYS, there are a great number of scientists who consider themselves to come under the rubric of neurobiologist. Subjects ranging from behavioural psychology on the one hand to molecular biology, immunology and the analysis of bacterial chemotaxis on the other have been applied to the analysis of the nervous system. Given this diversity, publishers and societies seem to take one of two approaches to the problem of how to present information in this area: to publish a journal which deals with specific aspects of the subject, or one which reflects the breadth of the field.

The Journal of Neuroscience (JN) is a publication of the latter type. Although the number of new journals one encounters in the library each year seems staggering, it is fair to say that many of these never amount to much. JN is an exception. It has rapidly become a major publication in neurobiology, one to rival the established *Brain Research* and *Neuroscience*; certainly, it is already required reading for anybody who seriously considers himself to be a neuroscientist.

There are several reasons for the warm welcome accorded to JN. One objection many authors have to submitting work to a new journal is that they do not know how widely it will be read or how high its standards will prove to be. In the case of JN this problem never arose since it is the official journal of the Society for Neuroscience and is distributed to all members of the society. Consequently, there has never been any doubt that the journal would be widely available and read by the relevant group of workers.

In addition, high scientific standards



have been ensured by having an editorial advisory board that reads like a *Who's Who* in neurobiology. This board is split into several sections — Molecular, Behavioural, Cellular and Developmental Neuroscience, and Neural Systems — which illustrate the wide range of the journal (purely clinical work, however, is not accepted). It is quite clear from an examination of the journal over the past year that major workers in each of these fields are using the journal for the publication of their best work.