Lawrence Andrew (Orcid ID: 0000-0001-6836-727X)
Prado Marco Antonio Maximo (Orcid ID: 0000-0002-3028-5778)

andrew.lawrence@florey.edu.au

Editorial: Exciting developments in neurochemistry research and publishing

Andrew J. Lawrence[1], Marco A. Prado[2]
[1] The Florey Institute of Neuroscience & Mental Health, University of Melbourne, Parkville, VIC, Australia
[2] University of Western Ontario, Robarts Research Institute, London, ON, Canada

Abstract
In this editorial we are happy to connect with our community to explain the changes introduced to the Journal of Neurochemistry over the last year and provide some insight into new developments and exciting opportunities. We anticipate these developments, which are strongly guided to increase transparency and support early career researchers, will increase the value of the Journal of Neurochemistry for authors and readers. Ultimately, we hope to improve the author experience with the Journal of Neurochemistry and continue to be the leading venue for fast dissemination of exciting new research focusing on how molecules, cells and circuits regulate the nervous system in health and disease.

[Main text, no separate header]
We start 2022 after one year of stewardship of the Journal of Neurochemistry, following the successful tenure of Jörg Schulz (2011-2020), who introduced a number of innovations to increase the rigour of research publications. As discussed below, we have continued in this vein with additional changes to enhance the journal's service to the community. It has been an unusual time for everybody, and we cannot thank enough the Editorial Office staff, Senior Editors, Handling Editors, reviewers and most importantly, authors and readers of the Journal of Neurochemistry. During this period, we have seen a substantial increase in the impact factor of the Journal (2021: 5.372) and we are also enthusiastic about the quality of original publications and reviews published during the last year. We write this editorial with the goal of engaging the neurochemistry community and to discuss several new features we are implementing for the Journal. We hope that these changes will continue to support the Journal of Neurochemistry with its mission to be a fair, community-driven and fast vehicle for worldwide dissemination of neurochemical research.

The Journal of Neurochemistry is part of the Baby Boomer generation, with its first article published in 1956 (Thomas & McIlwain, 1956), under the leadership of Derek Richter and Heinrich Waelsch (Turner *et al*, 2016). Since then, the Journal has published some of the most highly cited manuscripts in all aspects of molecular and cellular neuroscience and chemistry of the nervous system. During this period, the scientific community and editors have witnessed a revolution in our understanding of the molecular, cellular, and systems-level components of the brain, as well as molecular mechanisms of plasticity and disease. New technologies have helped to canvass

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novel and broader areas of research, so it is not surprising that neurochemistry now encompasses a much wider field than that covered by original publications in the journal. Indeed, our wide range of article categories [Gene Regulation & Genetics, Brain Development and Differentiation, Signal Transduction & Synaptic Transmission, Bioenergetics & Metabolism, Neuroinflammation & Neuroimmunology, Neuronal Plasticity & Behavior, Molecular Basis of Disease, and Clinical Studies, Biomarkers & Imaging (**Figure 1**)] highlights the broad spectrum of subject areas in contemporary neuroscience covered by the Journal of Neurochemistry, with a particular focus on how molecules, cells and circuits regulate the nervous system in health and disease. This focus establishes the journal as a primary resource for authors and readers to find pertinent research in their field and form relevant interdisciplinary connections.

What types of papers does the Journal of Neurochemistry publish and what does the future hold for neurochemistry? We are excited to see the quality and diversity of the work submitted and accepted for publication by the Journal of Neurochemistry. From molecular mechanisms in cultured cells (Agbaegbu Iweka *et al*, 2021; Bendahmane *et al*, 2020), neurochemical mechanisms in intact organisms (Abreu *et al*, 2021; Becker *et al*, 2021), new imaging and quantitative methodologies providing insight into neurochemical changes (Abdalla *et al*, 2020; Arber *et al*, 2021; Blank & Hopf, 2021; Dienel, 2021) and critical biomarkers in disease (Altmayer *et al*, 2021; Chakraborty & Basu, 2021; Chatterjee *et al*, 2021; Eden *et al*, 2021; Geula *et al*, 2021; Ginsberg *et al*, 2021; Glezer *et al*, 2021), the scope of the Journal of Neurochemistry has broadened to respond to the demands of our scientific community. Neurochemical mechanisms of disease are a popular topic covering neuropsychiatric and developmental disorders (Haase *et al*, 2021; Kozlowska *et al*, 2021; Liu & McNally, 2021; Nie *et al*, 2021; Nomura *et al*, 2021) and neurodegenerative diseases (Brosseron *et al*, 2021; Butler *et al*, 2021; Chatterjee *et al.*, 2021; Korecka & Shaw, 2021; Sathe *et al*, 2021; Trinh *et al*, 2021; Yuede *et al*, 2021). Similarly, studies into neuroinflammation and neuroimmunology are a growing area within the journal, such that in 2021 we published a special issue dedicated to this topic (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/14714159/2021/158/1). Examples of recent original articles in this area include preclinical studies in rodent models of multiple sclerosis (Tezuka et al., 2022) through to human studies assessing in the cerebrospinal fluid of patients for neurochemical markers of inflammation in neurodegeneration (Stampanoni Bassi et al., 2021).

Studies using animal models and cellular systems to provide causal mechanisms for results obtained in observational human studies also constitute an important part of the broadening scope of the journal. In parallel with the evolution of innovative methodologies reported in our manuscripts, the availability of larger datasets has also expanded. Structural and cell biology, *in vitro* and *in vivo* electrophysiological recordings, advanced genomics, proteomics and metabolomics, animal and human imaging using positron emission tomography (PET), magnetic resonance imaging and related techniques, and behavioral analysis coupled to *in vivo* recordings, are among the methodologies harnessed in articles published by the Journal of Neurochemistry. We are particularly inspired to witness the technological advances that now allow researchers to examine neurochemical markers and mechanisms *in vivo*, helping to translate basic neurochemical findings to advances in human health.

We are also enthusiastic about the revolution of Open Science that aims to increase the availability of datasets to further increase rigour and reproducibility in neuroscience. On that note, we offer reduced Open Access fees for the members of the International Society for Neurochemistry (ISN, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14714159/homepage/fundedaccess.html) to lower access thresholds and aid the community to disseminate their research to a global audience. In this regard, our publisher Wiley have negotiated a number of transformational agreements around the world for authors to freely publish as open access in Wiley journals.

During 2021, our Journal introduced several new features with the goal of providing a positive experience for authors and reviewers. We have simplified and streamlined the instructions to authors, which are now available in a number of languages other than English, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Portuguese. We have simplified the submission of first versions of manuscripts to the Journal of Neurochemistry: there are currently no specific formatting requirements for initial submissions, which can simply be provided as a single unformatted PDF. We also receive manuscript transfers from a number of other neuroscience journals facilitating submissions. To enhance transparency and quality, we now mandate full statistical reporting for all datasets and Western blots/micrographs undergo image analysis to uphold best accepted practices. We also offer authors the opportunity to obtain "open science" badges to demonstrate willingness for data sharing / content accessibility. The value of this scheme is the demonstration that authors are committed to sharing data and other research materials (such as new reagents etc). An important feature is that it also guarantees the location of the shared data. According to the Centre for Open Science, the use of this badge scheme has increased the rate of data sharing (see https://www.cos.io/initiatives/badges for full details).

We embrace social media to promote authors' publications and disseminate information as widely as possible, with active Twitter (https://twitter.com/JNeurochem, https://twitter.com/isn_society) Facebook www.facebook.com/ISN.Society/), and Instagram (www.instagram.com/isn_society) accounts. Through these channels, we inform readers of the latest research and special collections, promote authors' work and achievements, and share the latest opportunities, grants, news, and events relevant to the neurochemistry community. We introduced new initiatives and campaigns to support new authors and early career researchers (ECRs). Our publisher Wiley supports our promotions through Twitter (https://twitter.com/wileyneuro) and Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/wileyneuro), and we reach our Chinese audience through WeChat. Authors can find a wide range of useful resources on the Wiley website (https://authorservices.wiley.com/author-resources/index.html).

Why publish with the Journal of Neurochemistry? Our editorial board reflects our global community (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14714159/homepage/editorialboard.html). In this regard we are currently undergoing a review of diversity, equity and inclusion – for example at present the editorial board is 30% female and we are committed to a future of equal

representation. We are international and are working for equitable representation for geographical location, career stage and ethnicity. We aim to provide rigorous but fair and timely peer review of submitted manuscripts. We profile our editors via social media and with editorial articles to come. Handling editors are required to summarize and provide context regarding referee reports to help authors understand the most relevant comments from reviewers that need to be addressed if a revision is requested. Our average turnaround time for first review is currently 27 days, and we aim to further reduce this timeframe without impacting quality. Exit surveys show that the large majority of authors are happy with the submission process, peer review feedback, and the production process. Importantly, authors acknowledged that their manuscripts were reviewed by experts in the field who helped to improve the work. This is highlighted by example comments from authors "The reviewers and editors were highly qualified about the subject and gave constructive recommendations that improved our work. Their proposals improved the final product, they were generous and professional, we learned during the process" and "Critical reviews, balanced editorial work and careful examination of the replies". We take the author experience seriously, and welcome comments, including suggestions for improvement of this process where necessary.

The Journal of Neurochemistry is, ultimately, a journal that aims to serve the neurochemistry community. The Journal of Neurochemistry is editorially independent but closely aligned to the mission of its owner, ISN, to disseminate neurochemistry worldwide. In this regard, we wish to highlight several beneficial features that may increase our outreach to the community and, in particular, support ECRs. For example, our Mini-Meets were a highlight of 2021. These online symposia have been held in conjunction with Special Issues published in the journal and have showcased presentations mainly from ECR authors of selected reviews. In the future, other Mini-Meets will be organized with ISN and we will aim to disseminate and promote our Special Issues using the Mini-Meet format and continue to focus on presentations by ECRs.

Other important initiatives with ISN are our Flagship schools, which focus on a significant topic in neurochemistry and are led by experts in the chosen area of research. The Flagship schools also allocate time for constructive discussions on experimental design, scientific writing, best practices, open science and publication, to further help ECRs advance their career. The topic of the next Flagship school is "Brain Metabolism in Health and Disease" and up to 40 ECRs will be competitively selected to spend a week networking with distinguished lecturers and learning about the topic of the school (www.neurochemistry.org/isn-jnc-flagship-school/). A number of ISN schools have been organized over the years and a notable feature is that students mentored by a faculty member in the school write a comprehensive review on the topic of the school. These reviews have become excellent scholarly sources (Bordone *et al*, 2019; Lepeta *et al*, 2016; Schaefer *et al*, 2017), attesting to the quality of both students and faculty.

Special issues highlight areas of research that we consider to be key topics at the frontier of neurochemical research that deserve particular attention. For instance, the following Special Issues were published in 2021: Circadian Rhythms in the Brain, Presynaptic Dysfunction, Neurochemistry of Reward-Seeking, NeuroImmune Metabolism, Cholinergic Mechanisms, Mass Spectrometry in Alzheimer's Disease, Stroke and Energy Metabolism. Further, we have several

Special Issues soon to be released (Psychedelics & Neurochemistry, Brain Imaging). Articles in Special Issues undergo the same fair and rigorous peer review process similar to any other article submitted to the Journal of Neurochemistry, but they are usually guided by specific themes and authors are invited by Guest Editors who are leaders in their research field. Special Issues also include original manuscripts, and we will release calls for submissions of original manuscripts with every Special Issue. It is noteworthy to mention that once an article is accepted for a Special Issue it is published online immediately, there is no delay waiting for the finalised publication of the full issue. This maximises the immediate visibility of the paper while also ultimately linking it with a thematically relevant issue.

Reviews published by the Journal of Neurochemistry are authoritative and aim to critically synthesize a research topic while proposing ways to advance the field. Our reviews are typically well cited and provide landmark knowledge, helping researchers from complementary fields to go beyond merely summarising an area of research, and providing scholarly foresight. There are several advances in the pipeline for Reviews in our journal. We are currently creating two new types of reviews. “Milestone” reviews will cover landmark discoveries from the perspective of authors who have published extensively in the Journal of Neurochemistry on a specific topic. These reviews will usually be co-authored in collaboration with a younger researcher in the field, providing some historical perspective but also highlighting current consensus and future directions of the area of research. A second type of review, termed “Fundamental Neurochemistry” reviews, will also be established. These reviews will be written by trainees (within 5 years of their higher degree) who have already made important contributions to the topic of the review in collaboration with their mentors. There will be a request for applications, a selection process based on the topic and the original contributions from first authors. Trainee authors who have their “Fundamental Neurochemistry” review manuscript accepted for publication will automatically receive a JNC/ISN Trainee Merit Award to contribute to costs associated with participation in Neurochemistry or Neuroscience meetings. Please keep an eye out for the first announcement coming soon.

We are enthusiastic about the multiple changes in scientific publishing and the Journal of Neurochemistry is ready to initiate a new era in publication of neurochemical research. We hope to improve the author experience and continue to act as the scientific voice for the International Society for Neurochemistry with the goal of supporting and disseminating neurochemical research, while upholding the tradition of publishing novel and rigorous neuroscience research. In this regard, we are open to the ever-changing world of publishing and ensuring that our journal reflects best scientific practices.

Conflict of interest disclosure

Andrew J. Lawrence and Marco A. Prado are the Editors-in-Chief of the Journal of Neurochemistry the official journal owned and financed by the International Society for Neurochemistry (ISN). The authors declare no further potential conflict of interest related to this Editorial. No specific funding was received for this Editorial.

Author contributions

Andrew J. Lawrence and Marco A. Prado wrote the manuscript.
--Human subjects --
Involves human subjects:
If yes: Informed consent & ethics approval achieved:
=> if yes, please ensure that the info "Informed consent was achieved for all subjects, and the experiments were approved by the local ethics committee." is included in the Methods.

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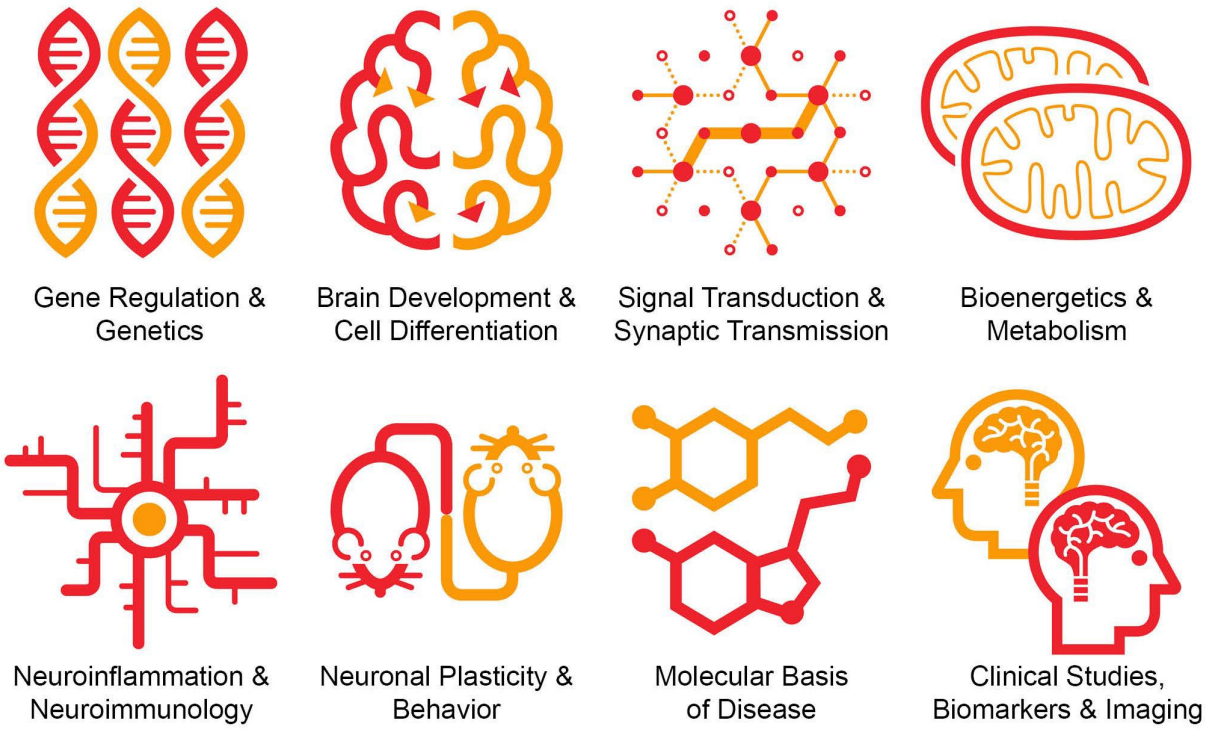
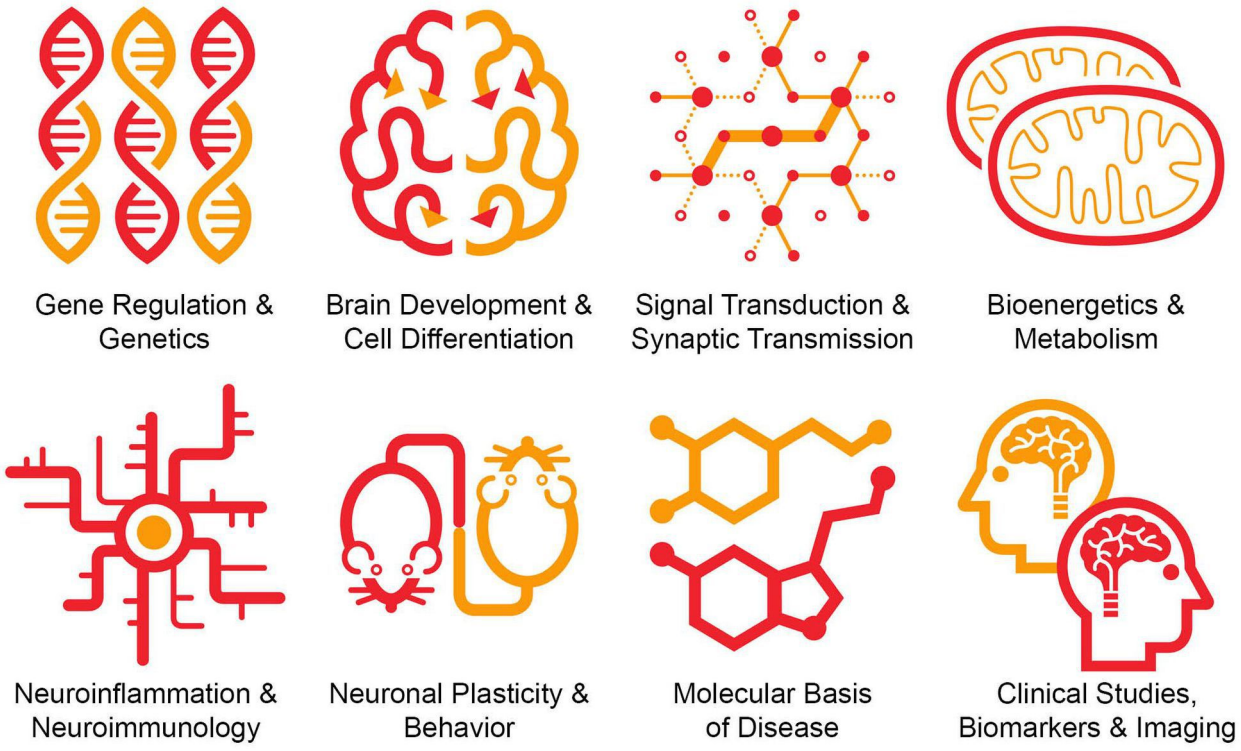
Figure legends

Figure 1

Journal of Neurochemistry publishes in 8 section areas: Gene Regulation & Genetics, Brain Development and Differentiation, Signal Transduction & Synaptic Transmission, Bioenergetics &

Metabolism, Neuroinflammation & Neuroimmunology, Neuronal Plasticity & Behavior, Molecular Basis of Disease, and Clinical Studies, Biomarkers & Imaging





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Lawrence, Andrew (contact); Prado, Marco

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Corresponding author
Dr. Andrew Lawrence

Address

Tel

FAX

E-mail
andrew.lawrence@florey.edu.au

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In this editorial we are happy to connect with our community to explain the changes introduced to the Journal of Neurochemistry over the last year and provide some insight into new developments and exciting opportunities. We anticipate these developments, which are strongly guided to increase transparency and support early career researchers, will increase the value of the Journal of Neurochemistry for authors and readers. Ultimately, we hope to improve the author experience with the Journal of Neurochemistry and continue to be the leading venue for fast dissemination of exciting new research focusing on how molecules, cells and circuits regulate the nervous system in health and disease.