

A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITORS

REFERENCE STYLE SOFTWARE AVAILABLE

Thanks to the work of Paolo Nichelli and Annalena Venneri, a reference style that corresponds to the requirements of Cortex is now available for EndNote and Reference Manager, two common reference managing programs distributed by ISI Researchsoft and Thomson Scientific. The styles will be added to the EndNote and Reference Manager packages for new users but they will also be posted on the new Cortex web-site so that they are available to all users.

CORTEX FORUM

We have launched the *Cortex Forum*, a platform for expanding the scope of the journal. The Cortex Forum will translate and comment on historical papers of interest to neuropsychologists (please submit your proposals to Georg Goldenberg: Georg.Goldenberg@extern.lrz-muenchen.de). The Cortex Forum will also publish comments about para-scientific matters, relevant to us all.

The first of such discussions will be devoted to the advantages produced by the availability of journals' "impact factor", and the potential misuse of the impact factor in the evaluation of the productivity and scientific influence of individual researchers, in particular, within the field of Neuropsychology. Consider for example, the difference between the two main factors listed by the Journal Citation Reports – Science Edition: the impact factor and the cited half-life. In short, the impact factor reflects the number of citations of a given journal within two years. Cited half-life represents the number of years taken for citations of papers in any given journal to fall to 50%. Comparing impact factor and half-life of neuropsychology journals versus neuroscience journals produces a clear cross-over interaction, whereby neuropsychology, on the whole, has a lower impact factor but a higher half-life than neuroscience journals. The term impact factor "has gradually evolved, especially in Europe, to mean both journal and author impact" (Garfield, 2000). This ambiguity may cause some problems when comparing the curriculum of candidates across different disciplines. In addition, the ranking could change if one considered another productivity "factor".

The second discussion topic in the *Cortex Forum* pipeline is the "peer review" system, an invaluable guarantee for researchers and clinicians which is central to scientific credibility. However, as it now stands, the process is far from watertight and not exempt from biases. The results of the reviewing process are often unsatisfying: referees are slow or hurried, occasionally inaccurate (Horton, 1998) and in that rare instance, even cantankerous. I am sure we could all amuse one another with endless anecdotes supporting this statement. Clear evidence of the unfairness of peer-review comes from the

provocative study of Peter and Ceci (1982). They selected twelve psychology articles by prestigious investigators and institutions and re-submitted them (changing the names of the authors and using fictitious affiliations) to the same twelve top American journals that had originally published them some two years before. Three of these re-submissions were detected as spoofs. Of the remaining nine, eight were rejected, not because of a feeling of déjà vu (lack of originality was never mentioned), but on the basis of one or another major flaw in the study design. Rothwell and Martyn (2000) have recently demonstrated a similar lack of reproducibility of peer review in clinical neuroscience. This is surely a matter for more than mere amusement. Is there any way we can improve the peer review process for *Cortex* through modification of our procedures, either radical or minimal? That the time is ripe for such a discussion to be launched is bolstered by the numerous international congresses focusing on peer-review, including one organised by the Journal of American Medical Association and the British Medical Journal next September in Barcelona.

The third topic that the *Cortex Forum* will address is the contribution of neuroimaging to our understanding of the organization of the mind and on the inconsistency between reported loci of lesion causing selective cognitive processing deficits in neuropsychological patients and areas activated by the same, but normally functioning, cognitive processes shown in neuroimaging studies. For instance, it is well known that deficits in word comprehension or reading follow lesions to brain areas which generally are not significantly activated when performance on such tasks are monitored with functional neuroimaging techniques (Abbott, 2001). Assuming that the geography of the mind is somewhere “north of the neck” (Fodor, 1999), is the availability of new imaging methods simply producing a plethora of colourful and influential brain maps that by virtue of their “sexiness” are guiding scientific inquiry, rather than scientific hypotheses generating novel findings using functional neuroimaging methods?

Contributions to any of the above topics as well as suggestions for other discussion topics are welcome, please submit them to the editors.

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