

Editorial

A Fast Track

This issue of the journal inaugurates another innovation, to be tried over the next year: the rapid communication. Despite or perhaps partly due to the explosion of biomedical journals in the last 20 years, timeliness can still be a problem for authors and editors alike. With the journal's turnaround and publication schedules now on track, attention has been turned to the need to publish timely data that can inform—or provoke—current controversies; and that can allow for the publication of novel findings likely to stimulate and improve patient care, teaching, or research.

The first such report, by Shea and colleagues—including one of us (K.R.)—describes unblinded treatment with donepezil in a small case series of patients who have dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB). The number of patients treated is small, and the design does not allow for a confident conclusion to be drawn about whether, or how or for whom, treatment will work. The data nevertheless seem to indicate a particular effect of cholinergic treatment on hallucinations in DLB. Does this matter?

The findings clearly need to be replicated in a double-blind, controlled study. The data help make the case for such a study, and their publication sheds some

insight into the pathophysiology of an illness for which no animal model is available. Though the data are insufficient evidence to warrant *routine* use of donepezil in DLB, many clinicians faced with no alternative treatment, and with patients who can be suffering greatly—especially from hallucinations that can be horrific—will want to try such treatment. To our certain personal knowledge, other physicians are doing so now. Publication of the early experience will hopefully be a potent stimulus to further research, lest we reproduce the experience of routine neuroleptic use in dementia despite a shaky empirical base.

The journal will also consider for rapid publication other such papers, but given the amount of manpower available at the editorial office, the approach will be undertaken sparingly and the editor will always have right of refusal. Within the limits of a quarterly journal, we believe that a publication fast track can provide a forum for the sharing of important information. We hope that it will benefit our patients, our audience and contributors, and thereby the journal itself.

To achieve this goal will require cooperation of all interested parties, particularly

the reviewers. In the present case, both reviewers responded within 7 days, and the authors incorporated their comments and revised the manuscript within another 3 days.

A 21-day time from receipt of the manuscript to a final decision will be our goal. To identify your manuscript for fast-track publication, please contact the

editor at the following e-mail address: eastwood@wpogate.slu.edu

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Mea Culpa

Because of an oversight outside the editorial office, certain figures in the article by Dr. Kim Jobst and colleagues were not properly presented in a recent *International Psychogeriatrics* supplement (Vol. 9, Suppl. 1, 1997, pp. 191-222). To rectify this, we are republishing the paper in the current issue (pp. 271-302) with an improved black-and-white version of Figure 1 and Figures 2 and 3 in color as Dr. Jobst had originally planned. We want to thank him and his colleagues for their patience in this matter.

Robin Eastwood, MD