



## The future of *Stress*: Perspective of the new Editor-in-Chief

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## EDITORIAL

# The future of *Stress*: Perspective of the new Editor-in-Chief

As of July 2012, I have taken over the role of Editor-in-Chief from John Russell. John is continuing on as Editor-in-Chief emeritus to help maintain continuity and excellence of the journal during the transition. I have taken on the role of Editor-in-Chief because I have a firm belief that the journal plays an important role in the community of stress researchers, spanning investigation of basic mechanisms in stress biology to the study of human stress interventions. Interest in stress biology has exploded in the last several years. For example, a search of the Society for Neuroscience's database indicates that annual meeting presentations concerned with "stress" have increased dramatically over the last decade. In 2004, the SFN meeting offered 13 sessions with stress in the title and 245 presentations included the word "stress" in the presentation title. By 2012, these numbers ballooned to 21 sessions and 519 presentations, essentially a "doubling" of the impact of stress research on the field. The journal has a unique role in the arena of stress biology, serving as a venue for communication of important findings in a number of different disciplines, and I feel it will rise to prominence as the interest in stress biology continues to expand.

Under John's leadership, the penetrance and impact of the journal on the field have steadily grown, with a 5-year impact factor of just under 3.0. Moreover, the Editors and the Editorial Board believe that the influence of the journal goes substantially beyond the impact factor metric, and are convinced that *Stress* occupies an important and critical niche in the stress field. The esteem in which *Stress* is held can be appreciated from the composition of the Editorial Board as well as the outstanding groups that publish in the journal, representing a cross-section of the best-recognized stress researchers from around the world. The continued success of *Stress* is in large part a product of efforts to publicize the journal at every opportunity, a tradition that I intend to continue. I am convinced that the recent surge in the number of laboratories working in the area of stress, and the growing importance of contributions from stress research in relation to improving mental and physical health, bodes well for the future of *Stress*.

To continue to succeed moving forward, part of my mission will be to make sure that *Stress* adapts to the rapidly changing landscape of the publishing world. We are already taking several steps to meet this end. First, we recognize the pressures faced by our authors for rapid publication, and are aiming to further reduce turn-around time for decisions. This will take a concerted effort on the part of both the Editors and our referees, as the number of papers submitted and accepted continues to grow, but we feel that this is a must in today's scientific climate. Second, accepted articles will be posted online as soon as possible, in two stages—the accepted manuscript within a few days and corrected proofs within few weeks. At this point, the online articles can be accessed (and cited!) by the scientific community and avoid the "lag" inherent in the full-print publication process. Third, we are working with the publisher to reduce the lag between acceptance and full-print publication through increasing our yearly page budget. Fourth, we are adding an online "Editor's Choice" feature, wherein articles of identified high importance will be highlighted and made freely available for a prescribed time period. Finally, we will work with the publisher and institutions to expand the online availability of the journal, which is currently improving but still has not achieved full saturation of the "market" of stress researchers.

We are also working to enhance the review process. In the coming year, we will add Associate Editors to handle key areas of stress research, including individuals well versed in human stress studies and in molecular and cellular biological approaches to stress research. In addition, we are evaluating the composition of the Editorial Board to ensure cross-sectional representation of the critical components of stress biology as well as the geographic breadth of the stress field. Finally, we aim to compress the time frame for reviews as a means of reducing decision time for manuscripts.

In summary, I am honored to take up the "Editor-in-Chief" mantle, and I recognize that I have the responsibility to take the journal to a new level, from a strong foundation. I plan to uphold the

tradition of excellence of the journal, fulfilling the vision of the original Editors, Ron DeKloet and Richard McCarty, and that advanced so effectively by John Russell over the last 12 years. I look forward to working with all of you to make *Stress* the flagship journal in our ever-growing and exciting field of scientific endeavor.

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