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# AJNR

## Genesis of a Journal: The Story of the Birth of the *American Journal of Neuroradiology*

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## Genesis of a Journal: The Story of the Birth of the *American Journal of Neuroradiology*

The history of the contributions of the *American Journal of Neuroradiology* to the field of neuroradiology since the publication of the first volume in January 1980 is well and thoroughly reviewed in the January 2000 issue of the *Journal*. What is not described in the review, however, is the story of the birth pangs of the journal—a story unknown to many.

I proposed the idea of a separate journal representing the American Society of Neuroradiology (ASNR) at the end of 1977, and a letter to this effect was sent to the then President of the Society, Dr. Sadek Hilal, and his Executive Committee. My concerns were primarily based on the pressures being applied to American neuroradiology, which could potentially weaken the specialty. Because of the ease of CT scanning, many general radiologists, neurologists, neurosurgeons, and public health officials whose role was to explore where CT scanners were to be located thought that neuroradiologists were unnecessary. The Executive Committee was enthusiastic about the idea of a new journal, and Dr. Hilal suggested that I should air the concept at the next meeting of the ASNR, which I did at the 16th annual meeting in New Orleans, in February/March 1978. Reasons given for the establishment of a journal representing the ASNR were threefold:

1. *Scientific.* The question as to whether there was sufficient material available from neuroradiologists for a new journal was answered by an analysis of the neuroradiologic publications in 1977 of 4 journals: *Radiology*, *American Journal of Roentgenology (AJR)*, *Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography*, and *Neuroradiology*. Of the 861 articles published (excluding case reports), approximately 13% were from members of the ASNR, suggesting that there was sufficient available material and that a new journal would not weaken these other journals to any significant degree. Furthermore, having our own journal would make our attempt to keep ourselves informed much easier. Also, the charter of the ASNR included a clause to establish channels for publication.

2. *Educational.* The ASNR had a duty to its members to develop a platform to express the huge volume of information then appearing in the various journals, particularly because of the explosive growth of CT scanning, and also a need to publish keynote lectures presented at annual meetings.

3. *Political pressures* being applied to neuroradiologists by neurologists, neurosurgeons, general radiologists, and public health officials regarding the clinical responsibilities for neuroimaging were considered forces that could weaken the society. One way to counter these attacks would be for neuroradiologists to have their own official organ of communication

wherein their philosophy of medical care would be clearly stated and representative of the ASNR.

The previously mentioned proposal was endorsed by members of the Society attending the March 1978 annual meeting, and, as a result, a journal feasibility committee and (subsequently Publications Committee) was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. Norman Leeds, consisting of Drs. Kieffer, Kricheff, Hilal, Newton, Rosenbaum, Scatliff, and myself, with Dr. Holman as a consultant. In a statement and questionnaire to the committee, Dr. Leeds expanded on the reasons for a new journal and stated that in addition to serving as a house organ for the Society, it would promote the exchange of ideas, act as a unifying force for the Society, stimulate research, firmly establish the place of neuroradiology within the other neurosciences, provide a platform for political comment, provide a vehicle for documenting proceedings of the annual meeting, and maintain the integrity of neuroradiology as an organ-oriented rather than a technique-oriented specialty. The journal also had to have priority on any paper presented at the annual meeting. Also considered was the question of whether there should be a separate journal or could a plan be developed in which an American neuroradiology journal would appear under the umbrella of another journal such as the *Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography* or *Neuroradiology*.

The committee also addressed the issue of an editor. Should the position be offered to Dr. Giovanni Di Chiro, the successful editor of the *Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography*, or should a publication committee seek applications from the membership at large? Also should there be a multieditor format with each member being responsible for a single issue? The committee was also given the task of contacting a number of different publishers such as Williams & Wilkins, Harper and Row, Churchill Livingstone, and C.V. Mosby in addition to the publisher of *Neuroradiology*, Springer-Verlag, and the publisher of the *Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography*. The publishers were also requested to provide 3-year projections and potential subscription rates.

The idea of a journal was met initially with considerable opposition by many radiologists in positions of executive power in the various scientific and political arms of organized radiology in the United States. Their opinion was that neuroradiologic articles were already being published in the American journals *Radiology* and the *AJR*. Because some American neuroradiologic articles were also being published in the *Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography* and in *Neuroradiology*, there was no need for a new journal. It was also feared that a new journal, as a receptacle for articles of neuroradiologic interest, would either di-

lute or eliminate the content of the 2 main American radiology journals. Furthermore, the financial implications of the ASNR owning and publishing their own journal were a concern to members of the society. Even within the founding members of the ASNR, there was opposition. One founding member told me, "A new neuroradiology journal will be doomed to succeed," and another founding member thought that the idea of a new journal was a bad one.

Some of the publishers declined and others were interested. J.B. Lippincott, for example, agreed to explore a contract with the ASNR, whereas others like Raven Press declined to make a formal proposal because of the potential market (in their opinion, it was small) and because it was unlikely to reach 1000 subscriptions in the foreseeable future, particularly because the society at that time (October 1978) only had about 500 members. Furthermore, Raven Press thought that a proposed journal would never make a significant profit and that the journal would never be able to select first-rank authors. As an alternative, Raven Press proposed an annual volume that would consist of major invited lectures from the annual meeting of the ASNR as well as some abstracts. Churchill Livingstone thought that their main interest in the United States was in book publishing, not journal publishing, but they would be interested if the ASNR considered their medical publishing division in Great Britain. Both C.V. Mosby and Elsevier/North Holland were interested, as was Springer-Verlag, which based their interest on the fact that abstracts of the annual meeting of the ASNR were published in their journal, *Neuroradiology*. The name "Neuro-Imaging" was suggested by some publishers for the name of the new journal.

Dr. Figley, Editor-in-Chief of the *AJR*, after being contacted by Dr. Leeds toward the end of 1978, expressed an interest in cooperating with the ASNR in its desire to have its own journal. Dr. Figley understood the desire of the ASNR for a scientific periodical and also expressed the need of the *AJR* for continuing access to first-class manuscripts in neuroradiology and, therefore, of having material that could reach the broader radiologic community. Consequently, he proposed the idea of having a neuroradiology journal under the umbrella of the *AJR*. The format would consist of selected articles from the new neuroradiologic journal that would also appear in the *AJR*, albeit at a later date. This plan would allow the journal to be published at lower costs and lower subscription rates than if the journal were independent.

The Feasibility Committee of the ASNR favored Dr. Figley's proposal after the *AJR* agreed that the selection of the Editor-in-Chief and control of the editorial policy would be the responsibility of the Publications Committee of the new journal. The Editor would be an Associate Editor of the *AJR* and would select the best articles for reprinting the month following their publication in the new journal. Furthermore, the ASNR would be free of all financial risk. There would be a bimonthly publication sched-

ule, and the journal was to be owned by the American Roentgen Ray Society (ARRS). Dr. Ray Gagliardi, chairman of the Publications Committee of the *AJR*, was approached and asked to help the ASNR by describing the principles the *AJR* used in choosing a publisher as well as the recent reorganization of the *AJR*. Dr. Gagliardi's guidelines and principles were of great help to the task of the ASNR of providing a template for the selection of a publisher. Among the important criteria were that a journal was expected to serve primarily as vehicle for communication with the members of the ARRS and to satisfy their need for readable information, scientific and commercial, that was well displayed. The publisher was required to have experience in publishing first-class medical journals and should be willing to select a single individual to develop a close working arrangement with the editorial office. The quality of the print, concern with possible delays in publication, and the need for the publisher to guarantee performance and promote an aggressive advertising campaign were included in the principles. The publisher of the *AJR*, Williams & Wilkins, was enthusiastic about Dr. Figley's plan to have a neuroradiology journal under the umbrella of the *AJR*.

In the fall of 1978, I was chosen the chairman of a selection committee for the position of Editor-in-Chief. My committee consisted of Drs. Kricheff, Leeds, Davis, Newton, Kieffer, and Scatliiff. The concepts of whether to have our committee seek applications from the membership at large or to have a multieditor format with each editor being responsible for a single issue were shelved in favor of sending out personal letters to potential editors. As previously mentioned, Dr. Giovanni Di Chiro, then Editor of the *Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography*, was a definite consideration, but there were concerns about whether he would be willing to take on the task of another journal because he was so ably handling his other editorial duties. Nevertheless, he was approached but graciously declined the offer.

Seventeen prestigious North American neuroradiologists were contacted, and 8 expressed an interest in the position of Editor-in-Chief. One of the neuroradiologists who declined suggested that because of the time involved in being a successful editor, the society should investigate someone who had recently retired. Interviews were set up in March 1979 in Toronto. Four candidates were short-listed, and of the 4, the eventual Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Juan M. Taveras, initially declined the offer. He subsequently indicated that he might agree to assume the responsibility if he was unanimously endorsed by the search committee, was able to select an associate editor with some compensation, could have a salary for a half-time secretary, and could commit initially to a 5-year term. Furthermore, the Editor-in-Chief had to be involved in the final selection of the publisher.

Simultaneously with these activities, Dr. Kieffer, President of the ASNR, thought that a questionnaire should be sent out to the membership asking for support of the new journal and its association with the

*AJR*. In the questionnaire sent out in February 1979, more than 80% of the membership (approximately half voted) supported the concept of a new journal. The results were presented at the annual meeting of the ASNR in Toronto in May 1979.

When Dr. Taveras asked me in June 1979 whether I could be considered for the position of Associate Editor of the new journal, because of a potential conflict of interest, I resigned from the position of Chairman of the Search Committee and my tenure on the Feasibility Committee. Dr. Norman Leeds and the Publications Committee unanimously recommended that Dr. Taveras be nominated as Editor-in-Chief on June 6, 1979. After visiting Dr. Figley in Seattle, the location of the *AJR* office, Dr. Taveras consented to the arrangement with the *AJR*. The terms discussed and accepted included the provision that all manuscripts on neuroradiology, radiology of the spine, and otolaryngology received by the *AJR* office were to be sent immediately to Dr. Taveras' office. Decisions as to which papers were to be reproduced in the *AJR* were Dr. Figley's responsibility. Simultaneous plans for the first issue to appear in January 1980 were set in motion. Dr. Taveras' consulting editorial board consisted of many of the giants of American neuroimaging: Drs. R. Thomas Bergeron, David O. Davis, Giovanni DiChiro, Derek C. Harwood-Nash, Sadek K. Hilal, Colin B. Holman, Steven A. Kieffer, Irvin I. Kricheff, Norman E. Leeds, Thomas H. Newton, Arthur E. Rosenbaum, Michel

M. Ter-Pergossian, and Galdino E. Valvassori. The initial proposed name for the new journal was "*AJR Neuroradiology*." This was shelved in favor of the current name *AJNR*, *American Journal of Neuroradiology*. I accepted the position of Associate Editor.

The first publication of the *AJNR* appeared as a January/February issue at the beginning of 1980. The opening editorial appeared under the joint authorship of Drs. Figley and Taveras. Acknowledging the potential fragmentation of radiology if an independent new neuroradiologic journal were to be published, they stated, "With great pride we announce a unique concept in medical publishing—the publication of a specialty journal that will share manuscripts with a large general readership" and "We editors commend the two societies for the cooperative spirit this new venture reflects." Dr. Paul F.J. New became an Associate Editor on January 1983 (leading understandably to comments that the Boston Mafia had taken over). I resigned the position of Associate Editor in December 1984 to be replaced by Dr. Robert M. Quencer. On January 1, 1986, the ASNR became the sole owner of the *AJNR*. In an editorial, Dr. Taveras expressed the gratitude of the ASNR "to the ARRS for its initial assistance and continued involvement in ensuring the success of the *AJNR*." The *AJNR* had come of age.

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