

Editorial

## A new *AGE*

The issue of this journal represents a new *AGE*, the beginning of the next stage in its development. This journal known as *AGE* was born in 1978 and represented the official journal of the American Aging Association founded in 1970. At the time of the first issue of *AGE*, there were a few other English language journals dedicated to gerontological research, including *The Journal of Gerontology*; *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*; *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*; *Experimental Gerontology*; *Experimental Aging Research*; *Mechanisms of Ageing and Development*; and *Gerontologia* (now *Gerontology*). However, several of these journals were rather broad in scope, accepting papers that dealt with biological, psychological, sociological, demographic, economic, and even political aspects of aging. A couple of privately published journals, e.g., *Experimental Gerontology* (founded by Alex Comfort) and *Mechanisms of Ageing and Development* (founded by Bernard Strehler) were being directed toward the biology of aging. The *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* was naturally directed toward research and practice in geriatric medicine.

The vision of the founding editor of *AGE*, Denham Harman, was to create an official journal for the American Aging Association with an exclusive focus on “promoting biomedical aging research with a major goal of significantly increasing the functional lifespan.” Apparently this was a good idea because in the following years, several other journals were launched with similar scope and objectives, e.g., *Biogerontology*; *Aging Cell*; *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*; *Aging: Clinical and Experimental Research*; *Neurobiology of Aging*; *Journal of Anti-Aging Medicine* (now *Rejuvenation Research*). Hence, this publication niche has become heavily populated with competing journals. The growth in the number of journals focused on aging is testimony to the ever-increasing interest in aging research. Because of the dedication of Dr. Harman, *AGE* held its own within the niche and continued to publish good research and review papers with the help of his

university, the University of Nebraska School of Medicine. This stage of the journal could be considered its youthful years, complete with growing pains.

In 1992, Dr. Harman retired as Editor-in-Chief of the journal, and Arthur Balin was elected to replace him. Arthur Balin carried forward Dr. Harman’s vision for the journal for the last 13 years. Among other improvements made in the presentation and appearance of the journal, the official name of the journal was changed to the *Journal of the American Aging Association*, and the journal was published under a private commercial contract. This stage of journal development could be referred to as its years of maturity, complete with a continuing search for identity and respect.

After reaching its maturity in 2003 at 25 years of age, the journal was still struggling to build its influence within a very competitive niche when I was elected Editor-in-Chief. It was clear to me and to many others on the Board of Directors of the American Aging Association that in order to increase the importance and visibility of our journal we needed some new initiatives, some rather dramatic changes to increase its recognition and reputation. To take the developmental metaphor a bit further, although the journal had reached its maturity, it needed some intervention to induce its further intellectual growth and to gain an enhanced reputation and stature within the scientific community.

I am very pleased and proud to announce we have entered this new stage of development for the journal, a new *AGE*. To carry forward our vision, we have formed a very healthy and productive partnership with Springer Science + Business Media. This partnership began with active discussions with many potential publishing partners, but our Board of Directors was most intrigued and optimistic with the plan that Peter Butler from Kluwer Publishing presented to us. This plan included changes to improve the appearance, content, management, and promotion of the journal while keeping ownership and editorial control for the represented scientific associations. Last year, Kluwer Academic Publishers merged

with Springer, and the merger of these two publication powerhouses can now provide even more expertise and resources for plans to improve our journal.

Some of the changes to the journal are quite apparent and others are not but should become more apparent with time. First, an old name on a new cover is readily apparent. We have returned to the first journal name, *AGE*, because it conveys a straightforward and easily recognizable theme. However, as the new cover attempts to convey, the focus of the journal will remain on biomedical aspects of aging. The journal will remain the official organ of the American Aging Association as well as for the American College of Clinical Gerontology and the International Association of Biomedical Gerontology. Each of these professional associations were chartered with help from the American Aging Association. The return to the name, *AGE*, also places less emphasis on any national affiliation of the journal. Indeed, a clear objective of the journal is to become international in scope and reputation. Second, there is a new Editorial Board for the journal. This board represents an internationally recognized panel of experts with a broad range of research expertise. They are lending their names, time, effort, and dedication to improving the journal. As part of this new initiative, several members of the Editorial Board as well as other members of the American Aging Association have volunteered to serve as Guest Editors and organize special issues focused on important topics.

This first entry under the journal's new look and mission is the current special issue focused on the Nutritional Modulation of Aging with Drs. Barbara Shukitt-Hale and James Joseph serving as Guest Editors. In future issues there will be other special editors who will focus on other timely issues. Future articles will also deal with new technology being applied to the study of aging, such as proteomics and

genomics as well as strategies for producing genetically engineered animal models. Regarding this latter topic, I am pleased to present such a paper in this first issue. Johnson and colleagues describe a major project of the Tennessee Mouse Genome Consortium (TMGC) that involves phenotype screening of mutagenized mice in search of genetically determined age-onset disorders and increased longevity. Another feature will be a list of current events of interest to the gerontological community that will be provided by Dr. Aubrey de Grey. We are also considering a series of clinically related articles titled, "Aging from Head to Toe." Other suggestions for improving the journal will be entertained.

No real progress in improving the journal can be made unless scientists submit good papers and these become well cited in the future. In order for this interest to emerge quickly, the journal will need to make continued improvements. Among other instant improvements, the journal will be on-line and available through the Springer website ([www.springeronline.com](http://www.springeronline.com)). To speed up the publication process and make it more efficient, the journal will soon have an electronic submission and on-line review process in place.

The associations supporting the journal along with the new Editorial Board are dedicated to moving the journal forward to a place of prominence within the aging research field as well as within the general biomedical literature. We would invite all scientists interested in the promoting research in biomedical aspects of aging to consider submitting their papers to our new journal and helping us perpetuate and prosper this new *AGE*.

Donald K. Ingram, Ph.D.  
Editor-in-Chief