

Introduction and Welcome

Starting on January 1, 2008, I have the honor and pleasure to act as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Gerontology*, the oldest journal in the field, that was founded by F. Verzar in 1957, and has since been published continuously by Karger, Basel, Switzerland. This latter point is of importance because I have a long-lasting professional and personal relationship with Karger that will certainly be an asset for the realization of our plans to further develop the journal. My predecessor William Meier-Ruge has, together with his editorial crew, successfully run *Gerontology* since 1995 and the transition to the new team was therefore efficient and smooth. I would like to take this opportunity to thank William Meier-Ruge and his section editors and editorial board members for their continuous endeavors on behalf of the journal.

Although *Gerontology* has maintained and even improved its position among the many gerontological journals over the years, each new Editor-in-Chief and his editorial colleagues of course want to give a journal a further boost and perhaps also a slightly different touch. However, the overall characteristic policy of *Gerontology* that discriminates it from all other journals in the field, e.g. its appeal to the broadest spectrum of readers, will certainly be maintained. As a matter of fact, we plan to further extend this scope by establishing a fourth section. So far, *Gerontology* has published papers that were assigned to one of three sections: Experimental, Clinical and Behavioural. We intend to keep this proven concept but will add a fourth section dealing with Regeneration and Technology.

Regeneration is becoming an increasingly important topic of gerontological research, both from experimental and clinical viewpoints. This not only includes stem cell research, but also involves comparative biological studies

dealing, for example, with the question what we can learn from investigating the regenerative potential of lower animal species, such as sea stars or lizards. This new section also aims to attract papers addressing the possibilities of an enhancement of the human body that, by Darwinian definition, is an optimal compromise developed over millions of years of evolution. However, new molecular biological knowledge as well as technological advances, e.g. in the field of informatics, have brought so far utopic ideas into the reach of realization. Will it be possible to support or even improve intellectual functions by direct connection with computers as has already been achieved, e.g. for the reuse of limbs in paraplegic patients? Should such concepts be applied to the aging population?

This brings us to the second topic of the new fourth section, Technology. Technological devices of various kinds will definitely improve the life of the elderly. These range from sophisticated devices to maintain sensory function, including the development of photosensors to help treat patients with macula degeneration, to more trivial products that are already in clinical use such as cochlear implants or various types of prosthetics. We feel that in addition to the present three sections, this new fourth section will attract work from many groups that also seek contact with researchers from Experimental, Clinical and Behavioural Gerontology.

Other plans with respect to publishing some additional types of manuscripts are summarized in the new Mission Statement.

As the Editor-in-Chief, I will be assisted by a competent Managing Editor and outstanding Section Editors as well as an Editorial Board, consisting of internationally renowned experts in the four fields mentioned above. My own scientific expertise lies in the field of immunopa-



Georg Wick



David Bernhard



Christine Süss



Andrzej Bartke



Bertrand Friguet



Elisabeth Steinhagen-Thiessen



Monika Lechleitner



Mary Luszcz



Mike Martin



Günter Lepperdinger



Chin-Teng Lin



Ladislav Robert

thology, especially the pathogenesis of age-related diseases, such as atherosclerosis, based on the principle of pleiotropic antagonism. I was the founder and director (1991–2003) of the Institute of Biomedical Aging Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Innsbruck, Austria. From 2003 to 2005, I was the president of the Austrian Research Council, the organization in our country that funds basic research in all scientific areas, from literature to quantum physics to gerontology.

The Managing Editor is David Bernhard, PhD, Innsbruck, Austria, who was trained in my laboratory and now is the Head of the Cardiovascular Research Laboratory of our Medical University.

The Editors for the Experimental Section are Andrzej Bartke, Springfield, Ill., USA, a pioneer in endocrinological gerontology, and Bertrand Friguet, Paris, France, who will provide his expertise in the analysis of age-related protein modification.

The Clinical Section is represented by Elisabeth Steinhagen-Thiessen, Berlin, Germany, an expert in clinically applied gerontological research, and Monika Lechleitner, Innsbruck, Austria, an expert in metabolic changes in the elderly.

Mary Luszcz, Adelaide, Australia, will continue to act as the Editor of the Behavioural Science Section and provide her expertise in behavioural age-related alterations. Mike Martin, Zurich, Switzerland, an expert in gerontopsychology, will act as the other Editor of this section.

In the fourth section, Günter Lepperdinger, Innsbruck, will be responsible for the regenerative part, based on his expertise in the field of stem cell and extracellular matrix research, and Chin-Teng Lin, Taiwan, will cover the technological part with his knowledge in information technology.

Ladislav Robert, Paris, France, has agreed to act as our book editor.

The secretariat of the journal will be run by Ms. Christine Süss in Innsbruck.

We are all prepared to embark on this new and challenging task with great enthusiasm and hope that the new format of *Gerontology*, also represented by a new design on the front page, will be attractive for our readers. It is our aim that each potential reader from any field of gerontology will find papers of interest in each issue of *Gerontology*.

Georg Wick, MD
Editor-in-Chief