

## FOREWORD

# Meeting the challenge of neurodegenerative diseases



“Neurodegenerative Disease Management will seek to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date information service for those with an interest in neurodegenerative diseases in the broadest sense.”

Anthony HV Schapira: Associate Editor<sup>†</sup>

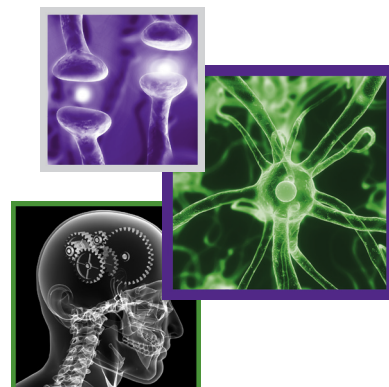
Neurodegenerative diseases are a major cause of progressive clinical disability causing impaired quality of life with consequences not only for the patient, but also their carer and the state. Global demographics dictate that age-related disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (motor neuron disease) will increase in incidence and prevalence and inevitably present a significant economic challenge to both established and emerging economies [1,2]. There are also many other disorders that fall under the umbrella of neurodegenerative diseases including Huntington's disease, spinocerebellar ataxias, the non-Alzheimer dementias and common problems such as peripheral neuropathy, macular degeneration, and others.

The challenge of neurodegenerative diseases needs to be met at several levels. Better facilities must be developed for diagnosis and treatment, and importantly for management of their clinical consequences and of their palliative phase. Undoubtedly the greatest unmet need is the availability of therapeutic interventions that are effective in slowing or preventing progression of the neurodegeneration. Logically, we would hope that a better understanding of the

etiology and pathogenesis of these different diseases will provide the platform for the development of drugs targeted to intervene at one or more sites in the pathogenesis cascade. Recent advances in this area provide reason for cautious optimism. Furthermore, the more we learn of the causes of neurodegenerative diseases, the more we begin to appreciate the overlap and commonalities between them in, for instance, pathology and pathogenesis.

Thus, there is a need for a greater and more detailed knowledge of the genetic basis and molecular pathology of neurodegenerative diseases. However, this must be matched by better clinical evaluation and understanding of the prodrome and evolution of these diseases and how to detect meaningful change in clinical trials that can reflect successful modification of disease progression in a manner and timescale that is attractive to industry.

This is where our new journal fills an important gap in the current market of knowledge. *Neurodegenerative Disease Management* will seek to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date information service for those with an interest in neurodegenerative diseases in the broadest sense.



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This service will comprise reviews, editorials and original articles, and novel themes such as 'Ask the Experts', 'Journal Watch' and interviews. The journal intends to take full advantage of the emerging multimedia approach to medical education in order to provide data and reflections in a timely manner. All of this will be underpinned by an expert and experienced editorial and management support team. Within our remit will fall important developments in understanding the cause and progression of neurodegenerative disease, the development of clinical and other tools to provide early diagnosis and to follow progression, clinical trial design and clinical trials of therapies in neurodegeneration. We look forward to developing the journal in, arguably, the most important area of medicine, and we encourage our readers to help us in this task with suggestions and constructive criticism.

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**Financial & competing interests disclosure**

*The author has no relevant affiliations or financial involvement with any organization or entity with a financial interest in or financial conflict with the subject matter or materials discussed in the manuscript. This includes employment, consultancies, honoraria, stock ownership or options, expert testimony, grants or patents received or pending, or royalties.*

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