

The new challenge for *Functional Neurology*

Dear Editorial Board, Associate Editors, Reviewers, Authors and Readers,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a situation that has recently come to light and of the challenge faced by *Functional Neurology* as a result of it. We also wish to underline how we intend to overcome this challenge through a new program. We have recently found out that a serious problem in data transfer between the current publisher (CIC Edizioni Internazionali) and Thomson Reuters (the international agency that evaluates journals and calculates their impact factor, IF) has resulted in a three-year interruption in the flow of data between them. During this same period, completely unaware of this very serious communication breakdown at the end of the publication chain, we were instead working very hard to renew *Functional Neurology*. The calculation of a journal's IF depends on a constant, uninterrupted flow of data, therefore this problem has *de facto* deprived our journal of an IF for the year 2014. This is particularly disappointing as it comes in the wake of an improvement in our journal's IF, which increased from 1.037 in 2012 to 1.855 in 2013. We can assure all of you that, over the past couple of months, we (Editor-in-Chief and Co-Editors), with the assistance of the editorial office, have done everything possible to try and get *Functional Neurology* reinstated in the citation index database with immediate effect, unfortunately without success. This is because the process of evaluating journal citations for the 2014 IF had already been completed and closed.

The priority now is to endeavor to climb the ladder once again, so as to ensure the rapid rehabilitation of our journal. Our aim, of course, is to achieve an even higher IF than in the past, but this could take up to a couple of years. Although this undesired situation is undoubtedly negative, we must look forward and regard the present setback as an opportunity to review the position of the journal and lay the foundations for its evolution over the coming decade. As a first achievement, *Functional Neurology* in recent days has been inserted in the Emerging Sources Citation Index (<http://www.pagepress.org/emerging-sources-citation.html>), also managed by Thomson Reuters, where the journal is now visible. This is a fundamental and mandatory step on the road to a new IF.

Over the past three years considerable effort has gone into renewing the editorial board, the peer review process and the submission platform, and also into implementing our open access strategy. Thanks to the contribution of several top-level scientists, we are proud to say that very good papers with excellent peer reviews are now published in our journal, and are cited and downloaded quite regularly. We believe we are on the right track and we wish to publicly thank all of you for your contribution so far; in this particularly difficult situation, though, it is essential that you continue supporting *Functional Neurology* in order to ensure that this process continues into the future. At a time when neuroscience journals are becoming increasingly competitive, we have been encouraged by Thomson Reuters to improve our performance further in terms of visibility and potential impact. In other words, if we want to keep the journal at the level at which we believe it deserves to be, we cannot stop here but, rather, must take up the challenge to improve even more. As Editor-in-Chief and Co-Editors, we are considering serious steps to allow *Functional Neurology* to compete with other neuroscience journals on the international scene. We will announce important changes to our publication procedures in the near future.

During this transition period, we need your full support and you can help us in several ways given that we must: 1) continue to receive papers of a high standard; 2) ensure an efficient peer review process; and 3) improve the rate of citations of papers published in *Functional Neurology*. We also intend to pursue a strategy of focusing on specific hot topics in neuroscience, including perspectives from multiple disciplines so as to promote cross-fertilization between basic and applied research. In this way, groups of pertinent papers can be gathered into "mini-books" so as to gain maximum visibility and citation. Please remember that papers accepted by *Functional Neurology* are immediately posted on the National Library of Medicine's PubMed website and are thus assured excellent visibility.

We would like to hear from you and we urge you to send your comments, questions and suggestions to funcneur@mondino.it. In order to help us gather and respond to your e-mails efficiently, please insert "COMMENTS ON EDITORS LETTER" as the subject of your e-mails.

Yours faithfully,
The Editors

Egidio D'Angelo (Editor-in-Chief)

François Boller, Claudia Gandini Wheeler-Kingshott, Nicola Vanacore (Co-Editors)