

Letter from the Founding Editor for Volume 7, Issue 1

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This is the first issue of the year for Volume 7 of the RRNMF Neuromuscular Journal. My colleague of many years, Dr. Josh Freeman, has allowed us to publish two of his recent pieces on the state of medicine in the United States. The article on the problems with pre-authorization was originally published as an opinion piece in the Arizona Star. Dr. Freeman's second article is timely, as it deals with the potential problems with AI as a communication vehicle to patients. In the section on original research, the University of Kansas neuromuscular group, to which I still have a long distance connection, is publishing the interesting phase 1B dose escalation study of oxaloacetate (OAA) in patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). This drug had previously been used in an Alzheimer's disease trial by our colleagues at KU (Swerdlow and Burns), and that is where we got the idea for the mitochondrial approach to neurodegenerative disease. We believe we now have good information from this phase 1B study, which can inform a potential phase 2 randomized controlled trial.

Also in original contributions is a description by Dr. Hussain and Dr. Shabani on how to operate a high volume clinical research program when you are not in an academic setting. Dr. Shabani has done this for many years at his large neuromuscular private practice in the Texas Medical Center. Dr. Hussain is a mentee of Dr. Shabani's, and he is emulating his mentor in his Austin practice. It is very impressive how both of these neuromuscular specialists have been successful in making clinical trials a significant part of the practice portfolio. Dr. Hussain presented this information at the NMSG meeting last year in Italy, and I asked him and Dr. Shabani to turn it into a manuscript. I am so pleased they have done that.

In the case reports section, Dr. Yuebing Li and Dr. Sakhi Bhansali report a fascinating case of a patient with Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT) that had a chronic cough as part of the clinical phenotype. The authors then provide a nice review of potential causes of neuropathic cough. Dr. Isho, Dr. Gonzales and Dr. Ma at the University of Washington Medical Center report a case of Lambert-Eaton syndrome and underlying prostate adenocarcinoma, an unusual relationship. The final case in this issue is reported by Leah Naasz, a medical student, and her mentors at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine. They describe a patient who had human herpesvirus 6 (HHV-6) infection discovered when they were being worked up for a case that resembles the acute motor and sensory axonal neuropathy (AMSAN) form of the Guillain-Barre syndrome.

In the review article section, we again publish an article based on a lecture given in the neuromuscular review course

that a number of colleagues have been involved in for over a decade. This lecture on motor neuron disease was given by Dr. Jonathan Katz. The co-authors are Dr. Todd Levine, Dr. David Saperstein, Dr. Mamatha Pasnoor, Dr. Mazen Dimachkie and myself. This is the sixth lecture from that course we have transcribed, heavily edited, and referenced. We believe these publications will be helpful to both those doctors who have taken the course, but perhaps even more to those who have not had that opportunity. We are working now on writing another lecture by Dr. Katz on immune mediated neuropathies which will appear in an upcoming issue. While I no longer give lectures in the course, the group is still going strong and puts on the course, usually by zoom, regularly. The upcoming course dates are July 25, August 29, and December 5. If you are interested in joining the course to hear these wonderful lectures, contact Dr. Mazen Dimachkie (mdimachkie@kumc.edu), the course director.

In our Art and Creative Works section, Dr. Michael Abraham has provided a beautiful prose piece about the joy of fatherhood and that our time on this earth is "borrowed".

In the last issue of this journal, I published a History of Neurology piece I called "The Tale of Two Toms"—about Thomas Willis and Thomas Sydenham. Studying neuroscience history has been a hobby of mine for many years. When I was chairman of neurology at KU Medical Center I would give the residents a short history of neurology talk after morning report. I am not sure how well received these were, but I enjoyed putting them together. And I videoed a number of these that have since migrated to YouTube. I have now begun to go back to those talks and videos and turn them into brief manuscripts with the PowerPoint slides as figures. In this issue, I am publishing three more History of Neurology vignettes. The first I call "The Sparkling Italians"—focusing on the brilliant scientists in the late 18th century, Alessandro Volta and Luigi Galvani, who were pioneers in experimental neurophysiology. I also touch on another incredible Italian physician, Giovanni Morgagni, from a generation earlier, who made major contributions to how we study and understand human diseases by publishing a book in which he describes over 600 autopsies and makes clinical correlations—in 1761! The next History of Neurology article is about a giant in neurology, Charles Edouard Brown-Sequard. He is of course now known through the ages as the physician who first described the clinical phenotype of spinal cord hemi-section. In addition, he was a fascinating individual who went back and forth from Mauritius (his birthplace), to Paris, to various stops in the United States, to London where he was one of the original professors at Queen's Square, and finally back in Paris to succeed Claude Bernard. I call him "the first international neurologist", and before airplanes. The last history of neurology article is on two famous American neurologists from the time of the Civil War: Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell and Dr. William Hammond. I call them "the Civilian and the General". Dr. Hammond was

Surgeon General, and he appointed his friend Dr. Mitchell to see injured soldiers at the Turners Lane neurology hospital in Philadelphia during the war. Dr. Mitchell, of course, made insightful observations about pain syndromes as a result of bullet wounds, which he called “causalgia”. Dr. Hammond went on to practice neurology in New York City. He published the first textbook of neurology in the United States, and he described the phenomenon of athetosis and hypothesized the site of the lesion was in the basal ganglia.

At the end of this issue, we remind readers that the Neuromuscular Study Group meeting this year is in San Antonio, September 24 to 27. I hope to see many of you there. I also want to remind you that the NMSG, in partnership with the American Brain Foundation and the American Academy of Neurology, provides funding for two-year neuromuscular fellowships. The window for applications to the ABF is

mid-June to October 1. See the information about both the NMSG meeting and the fellowships to take advantage of these opportunities.

Finally, for the art on the cover of this issue, I chose another beautiful painting from the University of Missouri Museum of Art and Archeology. I again chose an image of north Italy because it reminds me of last year’s NMSG meeting in Stresa (outside of Milan) and Lake Maggiore. The artist is Albert Bierstadt, a very prominent American painter who was born in Germany in the mid- to late-19th century. The large paintings most know Bierstadt by are of American landscapes, but he did travel in Europe, and this painting came from those journeys. Marie Hunter, the interim director of the museum, has provided some information about the painting and the artist, which was recently featured in the museum’s Art in Bloom exhibit.