

Elsevier: NeuroImage transition - all editors have resigned over the high publication fee, and are starting a new non-profit journal, Imaging Neuroscience

Summary: NeuroImage has long been the leading journal focusing on imaging neuroscience, with both the highest impact factor and the largest number of papers published annually. NeuroImage's editorial team has tried to convince Elsevier to reduce the publication fee from \$3,450, as we believe large profit is unethical and unsustainable. Elsevier is unwilling to reduce the fee; therefore, with great regret, all editors (more than 40 academic editors) of NeuroImage and NeuroImage:Reports have resigned. We are starting a new non-profit Open Access journal, *Imaging Neuroscience*, intended to replace NeuroImage as our field's leading journal.

Background NeuroImage was started in 1992. It publishes almost 1,000 articles per year and currently has an impact factor of 7.4. NeuroImage became fully OA (Open Access) in 2020. NeuroImage:Reports is a companion-journal started in 2021, promoting the publication of null findings and article types such as Registered Reports.

APC Elsevier has set the NeuroImage APC (article processing charge) at \$3,450 USD. Compared against this, estimates of direct article costs at relevant journals are generally around \$1,000 or lower. Scientists and funders increasingly feel that it is wrong for publishers to make such high profits, particularly given that the publishers do not fund the original science, or the writing of articles, or payments to reviewers, and pay minimal editorial stipends. **As a result, authors and reviewers are increasingly refusing to work with high-profit journals.**

APC discussions with Elsevier In June 2022 the NeuroImage editors formally requested that Elsevier reduce the APC to under \$2,000. As no reduction was offered, we wrote again in March 2023 explaining that we would all resign and start a new journal if the APC was not reduced. In April, Elsevier responded to all editors stating that the APC would not be reduced because they believe that market forces support the current APC.

Resignation and handling of current submissions As a result, all editors (more than 40 Handling Editors, Associate Editors, Senior Editors, and Editors-in-Chief) across the two journals have resigned. To avoid adverse impact on authors of papers under current consideration, the current editorship will continue to handle ongoing papers that are already submitted, until the end of 2023. This will include the continued handling of papers previously submitted and currently awaiting author resubmission (for minor-revision, major-revision and reject-resubmit decisions). However, we will not handle any new submissions, as we are now transitioning into starting the new journal.

New non-profit journal, *Imaging Neuroscience* All of the outgoing NeuroImage/NeuroImage:Reports editors are working together to start a new Open Access, non-profit journal. We are working with MIT Press to create the new journal, and aim to be ready for paper submissions very soon. The APC will be held as low as possible: we are aiming for less than half of the current NeuroImage APC, or even lower. The APC will be waived for low- or middle-income countries. Our ambition is for *Imaging Neuroscience* to replace NeuroImage as the top journal in our field, focusing on imaging of the brain and spinal cord, in humans and other species, also including neurophysiological and stimulation methods. The overall scope, quality level and entire editorial team will be the same as it had been at NeuroImage (combined with the editorial team from NeuroImage:Reports).

Our regret and conviction Our editorial teams wish to be clear that we take this action with great regret. We love our field, and are immensely proud that NeuroImage has represented the very best of our science. The editors have invested enormous effort into NeuroImage over many years, and none of us wanted to see it disappear. We have an extremely committed set of editors who are leaders in our field - a very special and highly functional team. We were torn between wanting NeuroImage to continue as our top journal vs our conviction that we need to take a stand on the extreme-APC question. We believe that journals like NeuroImage cannot succeed in the long-term, as researchers increasingly object to unreasonably high costs of publication and access. **We therefore believe strongly that we are taking the right action. In that regard, we are reassured by having full explicit support for our action from the four most recent past NeuroImage Editors-in-Chief: Michael Breakspear (Newcastle, Australia), Peter Bandettini (NIH, USA), Paul Fletcher (Cambridge, UK), and Karl Friston (UCL, UK).**

Our hope for the future We are committed to *Imaging Neuroscience* not only being the top journal in our field, but in demonstrating the way forward in non-profit publishing. Although we appreciate that commercial publishers need to make some profit, we feel that the era of extreme levels of profit made by some publishers is coming to an end. We are very excited about the new journal, and look forward soon to receiving submissions to *Imaging Neuroscience*.

Signed Stephen Smith (Oxford, UK), Til Ole Bergmann (Johannes Gutenberg, Mainz, Germany), Birte Forstmann (Amsterdam, Netherlands), Alain Dagher (McGill, Montreal, Canada), Shella Keilholz (Emory / Georgia Tech, USA), Kristen Kennedy (UT Dallas, USA), Sonja Kotz (Maastricht, Netherlands), Cindy Lustig (University of Michigan, USA), Bruce Pike (University of Calgary, Canada), Marc Tittgemeyer (Cologne, Germany), Mark Woolrich (Oxford, UK), Thomas Yeo (NUS, Singapore), Andrew Alexander (Madison, Wisconsin, USA), Janine Bijsterbosch (Wash U, St Louis, USA), Tjeerd Boonstra (Maastricht, Netherlands), Mallar Chakravarty (Quebec, Canada), Chris Chambers (Cardiff, UK), Catie Chang (Vanderbilt, USA), Bradley Christian (Madison, Wisconsin, USA), Sarang Dalal (Aarhus, Denmark), Nai Ding (Zhejiang, Hangzhou, China), Audrey Duarte (UT Austin, USA), Audrey Fan (UC Davis, USA), Alexandre Gramfort (Paris-Saclay, France), Gesa Hartwigsen (University of Leipzig and MPI-CBS Leipzig, Germany), Mbemba Jabbi (UT Austin, USA), Ulrike Krämer (Lübeck, Germany), Martin Lindquist (Johns Hopkins, USA), Jean-Francois Mangin (NeuroSpin, France), Kevin Murphy (Cardiff, UK), Jonathan Polimeni (Harvard, USA), Emma Robinson (KCL, UK), Monica Rosenberg (University of Chicago, USA), Sepideh Sadaghiani (UIUC, Illinois, USA), Mohamed Seghier (Khalifa University, UAE), Yen-Yu Ian Shih (UNC Chapel Hill, USA), Axel Thielscher (TU Denmark, Denmark), Lucina Uddin (UCLA, USA), Dimitri Van De Ville (EPFL and UNIGE, Switzerland), Wim Vanduffel (KU Leuven, Belgium), Chao-Gan Yan (CAS, Beijing, China), Anastasia Yendiki (Harvard, USA).