

explanation of the relevance of the astonishing advances in molecular genetics to neurological practice. We hope that this series will stimulate not just interest but lively debate in our correspondence section. The Neurological Management series will also be published as a book in due course.

These changes will not deflect the journal from its main task of publishing the best papers in clinical neurological, neurosurgical, and neuropsychiatric science. Previous changes have been followed by gratifying

improvements in the position of *JNMP* in various citation indices. If the copy of the journal that you are reading is not your own, check whether your membership of your national Neurological Society entitles you to an individual subscription at a discount that is almost half price.

RAC HUGHES  
Department of Neurology,  
UMDS, Guy's Hospital,  
London SE1 9RT, UK

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## Neurological stamp

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### Casper Wistar (1760–1818)

Caspar Wistar obtained his medical education at the University of the State of Pennsylvania in the United States and at Edinburgh University in the United Kingdom, where he was twice president of a student organisation, The Royal Medical Society. He also assisted in organising a natural history society.

He returned to the United States, practised in Philadelphia and, in 1789, was appointed Professor of Chemistry, later Professor of Anatomy, Surgery, and Midwifery, and then Professor of Anatomy. Wistar described the ethmoid bone. His text book *A system of anatomy for the use of students of medicine* (two volumes, 1811–14) was the first such American work.

He had weekly library gatherings at his home with members of the American Philosophical Society to which, in 1787, he succeeded Thomas Jefferson as President. These famous meetings, which continued after his death, were known as Wistar parties.

Wisteria, a high-climbing, woody vine of the pea family, native to China, Japan, and eastern North America, was named after Wistar by the botanist and ornithologist Thomas Nuttall. A Japanese stamp issued in 1986 shows the wisteria vine (Stanley Gibbons 1052, Scott 881A).

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