
The transition

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Biographical notes: Bal Ram Singh has held faculty positions at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, University of Wisconsin, Harvard Medical School, Georgetown University, and Jawaharlal Nehru University for more than 27 years. He is currently a Professor and the Director at the Botulinum Research Center, Institute of Advanced Sciences, Dartmouth, MA. He has worked with botulinum and other toxins for more than 28 years and is the editor of *The Botulinum Journal*.

Change is the law of nature, so we are in continuous transitions in every aspect of our lives. The field of botulinum research is ever expanding, as more and more indications are being treated with botulinum neurotoxin therapy. In the past eight years since the inception of *The Botulinum Journal*, I have had wonderful opportunities to read many articles of excellent value to advance the field. It has been a privilege to work with many colleagues on the editorial board, including editorial leadership.

A journal exclusively on a particular molecule is always risky for its survival. Botulinum neurotoxins are a complex group of molecules with a wide outreach as a toxin and a medicine, encompassing their bacterial origin of single, with their target being the complex human nervous system.

It was and still remains a hope of mine that the scientific community embraces the idea of botulinum toxin as a model molecule for understanding a very wide range of academic fields, from microbiology, genetics to biophysics, physiology, and therapeutics. In my view there is indeed no other example of a biological system which potentially evolved over two billion years ago, and continues to evolve with many strains producing dozens of subtypes of botulinum neurotoxins. This augers well for the botulinum research and analysis, thus enhancing the chances of more publications through a publication like *The Botulinum Journal*. However, the journal has not caught the fancies of most researchers in the field as was expected at the beginning of its launch. One of the major issues has been its listing with the pubmed indexing. There are strict criteria for that listing, and it is hoped that it will be accomplished in the near future.

Even though the government funding of botulinum neurotoxin as a biothreat is receding in the past few years, it is hoped that the medical use of the toxins will continue to evoke interest in both basic and clinical research of botulinum neurotoxins. The journal can continue to provide much needed scholarly information on the experimental, clinical, and integrative research. The journal could become an advocate for safe use of the toxin worldwide not only for diseases but also for developing nanobiotechnology.

With my move from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth to establish an independent institute, the Institute of Advanced Sciences where I moved the Botulinum Research Center from the university, it has been a struggle to juggle many responsibilities that come with developing a new academic and research entity. I regret that the journal suffered as a result, and it has been a cause of major anguish for me.

The Botulinum Journal under the tutelage of its new editor, Professor Andrew Pickett, has all the probability to flourish and reach new heights. Andy has been an inspiration and was involved with the journal as an editorial board member right from the beginning, and as a frequent contributor. He has long history of his own work with botulinum neurotoxins, and is a respected scholar in the field. We are very excited about the journal with him at the helm. I hope that all the well wishers of the journal and botulinum research will extend helping hands to Andy.

As I say goodbye to my role as the editor of *The Botulinum Journal*, I also want to thank my colleagues who edited special issues of the journal, and to the authors who contributed to the journal. I am very grateful to the staff at the Inderscience Publishers, who have been always willing to offer helping hands in getting the journal issues out. Their technical expertise and professional support has been very helpful throughout my tenure.