

Millennium editorial

With this last issue for 1999 of the Swiss Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, the 20th Century and the second Millennium come to a close. I take this opportunity to reflect briefly on Swiss Neurology as I have witnessed it during the past three decades.

In spite of its small size, Swiss neurology has maintained a high profile and is well respected for its high educational standards, quality of care and research expertise. In our rapidly changing world of health care issues and the emergence of managed care, the practising neurologist is constantly faced with new challenges. In academia new teaching forms are replacing the classic teaching habits. Practitioners need certifications in Doppler, EEG and EMG, while medical schools have to go through accreditation procedures. In brief, regulation or sometimes over-regulation is what we have witnessed at all levels of our activities in recent years.

But the direct way we care for patients has also been profoundly modified, not so much by the new rules for our profession, but by the new panoply of drugs that is at our disposal. I believe that no other single activity has shown so many changes as drug prescription. Novel agents for epilepsy, Par-

kinson, Alzheimer, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, multiple sclerosis, Guillain Barré syndrome, stroke or migraine, to name a few, bring effective relief or modify the course of the disease. These changes are to me bewildering and of a size unimaginable only a few years ago. Together with the progress of molecular medicine, even more promising therapeutic strategies are in the making.

Our daily activities are also increasingly shaped by the communication revolution bringing a seemingly endless number of new possibilities. None of us can ignore the world wide web, and the impact of internet is already felt in dealing with patients. Wireless voice transmission has been around for some time, wireless data transmission will undoubtedly have a major impact in our data acquisition systems in the next century.

It is my belief that all these developments, technological or medical, will help us practising the neurology that our patients will expect from us in the next Millennium: effective and compassionate, evidence based and humane.

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