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Editorial

Vision, courage, and academic freedom



Almost 14 years ago, *JPAD* was founded on the vision that progress in the fight against Alzheimer's disease would have to start early in the disease course in order to maintain cognitive function and prevent neurodegeneration. In the first years of the publication, only a few papers were submitted, which allowed us to process full peer review without any delays. In 2025, we expect to receive nearly 1,000 paper submissions, with only about 15% accepted following a rigorous and diligent peer review process. The review process has become longer over the years and we expect additional delays before final acceptance. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude to all of our Editorial Board members for their commitment and dedication in sharing their unique expertise with the journal, without compensation.

In 2022, the *Phase III* paper on aducanumab results was submitted to the journal. Following extensive review, all reviewers recommended publishing this manuscript with revisions. Due to the controversy surrounding aducanumab in the public realm, *JPAD* decided to publish both the paper [1] and invited editorials presenting different opinions [2]. The aducanumab trial was the first to report that a high dose of a monoclonal antibody both reduces amyloid in the brain, and slowed cognitive decline in one of the two trials. Since its publication, the paper has stimulated discussion and has been cited hundreds of times; and its results have been confirmed by similar clinical findings in the lecanemab and donanemab monoclonal antibody trials [3,4]. These drugs have now been approved by the FDA and several other regulatory agencies worldwide.

JPAD has also received recommendation papers written by expert panels composed of world-renowned experts, with acknowledged experience in using these drugs. These papers aim to share knowledge with the medical community and provide guidance on the optimal use of the drugs under discussion, while also considering their limitations and potential side effects. These papers have been widely cited and have inspired national and international recommendations [5,6]. Additionally, *JPAD* has published companion editorials discussing the meaningfulness of various study results, encouraging reasonable interpretations which reflect different perspectives [7,8]. Such attempts to report data from peer-reviewed original publications accompanied by additional commentaries and multiple interpretations have, indeed, become a hallmark of this journal.

The Journal fully adheres to the principle that in the development of drugs for clinical use the gold standard of truth is large-scale randomized controlled trials. These trials are conducted under rigorous scrutiny by regulatory agencies as well as ethics and safety boards and, importantly, all trial data are submitted to regulatory bodies for independent confirmation of results, prior to approval. Poorly informed, non-expert

attacks do a disservice to the families of those suffering from Alzheimer's. These attacks also risk slowing further trials already underway that could ultimately benefit the millions suffering from this devastating disease.

Like many other scientific journals, *JPAD* occasionally receives requests for refutation or retraction of papers. Conflicts of interest can exist on both sides i.e., in those reporting results and in those questioning such results. In such circumstances, *JPAD* asks the Editor-in-Chief with the most relevant expertise to analyze the paper and/or complaint, and provide his/her conclusions to objectively ensure that the best principles of peer review are diligently applied. *JPAD* consistently follows the editors' decisions and respects their academic freedom—never responding to legal threats or external pressures seeking to retract or maintain a paper for reasons outside scientific integrity.

JPAD's Editorial Board members are among the leading experts in the field, actively involved in designing and interpreting large drug trials. Any potential conflicts of interest are disclosed in the journal in the most appropriate manner and with full transparency.

Vision, academic freedom, and courage are essential in the fight against Alzheimer's disease. *JPAD* is proud to be in the arena, alongside its hundreds of authors, reviewers, and Editorial Board members.

Declaration of competing interest

Bruno Vellas is the Founding President of IHU HealthAge (ANR-23-IAHU-0011), affiliated with Toulouse University Hospital and Inserm Cerpop. He is also an investigator in clinical trials sponsored by several industry partners. In the past three years, he has served as a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) member for Biogen, Alzheon, Novo Nordisk, Lilly, Eisai, and Roche, without any personal compensation.

Prof. Bruno Vellas, M.D., Ph.D.
JPAD founding Editor, on behalf of the *JPAD*
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