

Editorial

The European Behavioural Pharmacology Society

The year 1990 marks the 100th volume and the 30th anniversary of this journal which has developed into a major influence in the field and into one of its undoubted assets, as noted in a recent editorial (Barry and Robbins 1990, *Psychopharmacology* 100:1–2). It is therefore noteworthy that the discipline has spawned sub-areas that are themselves gaining recognition as subjects in their own right. Among these is behavioural pharmacology, which has been one of the main contributors to the pages of *Psychopharmacology*, and which is now served by societies in North America and Europe. We do not know how behavioural pharmacology began in Europe, but we do know how the European Behavioural Pharmacology Society (EBPS) began because we were there. Here we give a personal account of the background to the formation of EBPS and its activities to date, and some of our hopes for the future. We also state the principles that we have tried to enshrine in the Constitution and in the day-to-day functioning of EBPS. We tried to establish EBPS according to these principles and we look to the members to preserve and build upon this heritage. The views expressed in this editorial are our own and may not necessarily reflect agreed policy of the society in all instances.

The origins of EBPS

Behavioural pharmacology has often been included in the activities of broader societies of pharmacology, psychology and neuroscience. While it is important for the subject to be properly integrated with its parent disciplines, its requirements are not fully met by broader organisations. Prior to the founding of EBPS, there was no society that provided a “home” for the subject in Europe. There were no parallels to the Behavioral Pharmacology Society in the U.S.A., or to the Psychopharmacology Division of the American Psychological Association. Furthermore, within behavioural pharmacology, practitioners of particular approaches or methods were even more isolated. It was to foster the rapidly-growing

area of discriminative stimulus effects of drugs that Francis Colpaert and John Rosecrans organised the first International Symposium on Drugs as Discriminative Stimuli in July 1978, with support from Janssen Pharmaceutica. Subsequently, the European Study Group for Internal Stimulus Control was formed, to hold small informal meetings (organised by Jef Slangen and Ian Stolerman), to enable workers to discuss their recent findings. This group had a parallel in the USA where the Society for Stimulus Properties of Drugs (SSPD) was formed at about the same time (Lal and Overton 1989, *Drug Dev Res* 16:97–100). About 30 people attended the meetings of the European Study Group that were held in Birmingham, England (1979), Brighton, England (1980), Liege, Belgium (1981), Hamburg, Germany (1983), and London, England (1984). At the 1984 meeting, there were presentations from workers in England, France, Sweden, Israel, Brazil, India and the USA. There was no meeting in 1982 because in that year Francis Colpaert and Jef Slangen organised a second International Meeting on Drugs as Stimuli in Beerse, Belgium.

The possibility of developing the European Study Group into a properly constituted society was discussed at the meetings from 1981 onwards. There was a recognition that it was not just the approach focussing upon drugs as stimuli that lacked a base in a society; in Europe, there was no forum for behavioural pharmacology as a whole. Furthermore, a successful society would necessarily cover a much broader scientific field. However, none of the people urging this development were willing to put it into practice. There was also the hope, forlorn as it turned out, that the relatively new European Neuroscience Association (ENA) would provide a strong base for behavioural pharmacology to be presented alongside other related work. ENA encouraged the European Study Group by providing facilities for those of its meetings that were held as satellites of the main ENA conferences. However, it was very rare for behavioural pharmacology to be featured in the lectures or symposia organised by ENA; it was submerged among hundreds of posters and it had no identity or recogni-

tion. After the close of the 1983 (Hamburg) meeting of the study group, held in association with the ENA meeting, Ian Stolerman was persuaded to take the initial steps to the formation of a wider society covering behavioural pharmacology as a whole, and he agreed to attempt to establish a steering committee in the coming year. The way in which EBPS grew out of the International Drug Discrimination meetings and the European Study Group has not been emphasized before because interest in the new society would have been greatly diminished if it was perceived as primarily an organisation of drug discrimination researchers. Nevertheless it should be recognised that EBPS would not have been formed if the heritage of the drug discrimination meetings did not exist.

The Steering Committee, 1984–1986

After some consultation, Ian Stolerman invited 10 prominent behavioural pharmacologists to join a steering committee to oversee the birth of the new society. The letter of invitation, sent out on January 5 1984, stated the Steering Committee was “to investigate the possibilities for a European Association on the behavioural and psychological effects of drugs ... to include all studies of drug action with a predominantly behavioural or psychological nature, with “behavioural” being widely defined to include both unconditioned and conditioned behaviours (classical and instrumental).” Happily, everyone who was invited to join the Steering Committee responded positively and enthusiastically, and its members were T. Archer (Sweden), K. Bättig (Switzerland), B. Berger (Israel), G. Bignami (Italy), F.C. Colpaert (Belgium), M. Lyon (Denmark), T.W. Robbins (UK), J.L. Slangen (The Netherlands), I.P. Stolerman (UK) and P. Soubrie (France). The Steering Committee put together some initial ideas through postal communication and held its first meeting on July 20, 1984. The meeting took place during the IUPHAR conference at the Barbican Centre in London; behavioural pharmacologists were encouraged to attend this meeting by the satellite organised by the European Study Group. However, the lack of any funds help by the yet to be formed society meant that the meeting was held on the public terrace of the Barbican Centre; happily the weather was atypical and the venture was not washed away by a rainstorm.

A number of important decisions were taken at the Barbican meeting. A society would be formed, to be called the European Behavioural Pharmacology Society, it was to organise an inaugural International Meeting in 1986, and the meeting was to be in Antwerp, Belgium. The society would be formally constituted at the meeting in Antwerp, where a Committee would be elected. In the interim, the Steering Committee was expanded to include four additional members: R. Dantzer (France), J.P. Huston (Germany), M. Krsiak (Czechoslovakia) and C. Spyraiki (Greece).

During 1984–1986, members of the Steering Committee expended great amounts of time, energy and other

peoples' money in establishing EBPS and organising the Inaugural Meeting. Although there was extensive consultation, Ian Stolerman took on the main responsibility for the general organisation of the society. Francis Colpaert was the organiser for the meeting, and the scientific content was proposed mainly by F.C. Colpaert, T.W. Robbins and I.P. Stolerman; Trevor Archer and Melvyn Lyon raised most of the funds donated by industrial sponsors of the meeting.

The Inaugural Meeting and beyond

The inaugural meeting took place from July 2–6, 1986 and it was attended by over 200 behavioural pharmacologists, including many delegates from North America. A satellite, Transduction Mechanisms of Drug Stimuli, took place on July 5 and 7, organised by F.C. Colpaert and R.L. Balster (for Society for Stimulus Properties of Drugs). The scientific sessions were well attended and the organisers were pleased to hear that participants were so interested in the programme that they wanted to hear all of the presentations that took place in parallel sessions. Abstracts of the inaugural and subsequent international meetings of EBPS were published in *Psychopharmacology*. The EBPS conference concluded with a Business Meeting, at which members of the Steering Committee were very gratified to hear a comment from the floor (Veronica Grimm), that at last behavioural pharmacology had found a home in Europe. A draft constitution for the Society was then discussed, a committee and officers were formally elected, and EBPS was declared officially formed. Applications for membership were accepted from that time onwards.

By the time of the second International Meeting of EBPS, held in Athens in 1988, membership and attendance had grown to 300, and a substantial reserve of funds had been built up due to the generosity of donors and the tremendous efforts of the Treasurer, Trevor Archer. As far as we know, the EBPS conferences are the only regular series of major, international meetings devoted to behavioural pharmacology presently organised by any society in any country or continent. Members of EBPS have also been enthusiastic in putting forward proposals to organise meetings under the auspices of the Society, and three such meetings have taken place (Serotonin and Behaviour, Amsterdam 1987; Neuropharmacology and Behaviour, Poland 1988; Mesolimbic Dopamine and Behaviour, Malta 1989). Alexander Cools has been Chairman of EBPS since the Athens meeting.

Aims and principles

The society aims to advance the development of behavioural pharmacology primarily through the organisation of international scientific meetings. The main purpose of the meetings is to disseminate the latest results of research, both by members and non-members. It is of the utmost importance that the scientific standard of

these meetings is of the highest possible level, and the organisers have therefore always tried to obtain the very best speakers on its selected topics, regardless of where in the world they are based.

A secondary aim of the meetings is to assist practitioners of behavioural pharmacology in obtaining an adequate breadth of knowledge, extending into related disciplines. To this end, the programmes of the main meetings feature invited talks by lecturers of international renown on topics in experimental psychology, psychiatry, biochemistry, and other pertinent areas. We hope that it will be possible to further develop this aim in the future, by holding meetings of a primarily educational nature that will be particularly suitable for younger members, although we may all benefit from them given the quantity and diversity of research output now.

In establishing EBPS, the founders took care to avoid favouring any one scientific approach unduly. Advocates of ethological approaches are as welcome as those of the Harvard school of operant behavioural pharmacology. Behavioural toxicology, for example, has always been considered within the remit of the society. We must retain an open mind on the areas and approaches to be covered to ensure the future unity of the subject and the capacity of the society to adequately serve it. It is hoped that the meetings will increasingly revolve around *problems* attacked by behavioural pharmacologists, and that there will be a decline in special pleading for the merits of one theoretical viewpoint rather than another.

From the outset, EBPS was established as a partnership between academia and industry. There has been no discrimination in favour of, or against, the inclusion of workers based in industry in any aspect of the society's activities, including criteria for membership, subscription rates, membership of the Committee and Organising Committees for meetings, and participation in meetings. EBPS is, like many other scientific societies, a beneficiary of support from industry; this sponsorship has been generously given and gratefully received. The

EBPS reserve fund is intended to ensure that the need for sponsorship will decline rather than increase as time goes by.

Thus, while EBPS was formed as a society for advancing the subject in Europe, it is not a society purely of and for Europeans. It has been an aim of the society to enhance the status of the subject within the scientific community rather than through seeking publicity for it in the public media. However, we should consider carefully whether this is the best approach to ensure that behavioural pharmacology has an adequate voice when important decisions are taken on, for example, the marketing of novel pharmaceuticals, the regulation of the availability of abused drugs, and the adequacy of professional qualifications. If the European Community starts to take such decisions, should it not turn to the European Behavioural Pharmacology Society to provide expert advice?

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