

Journal of Neurotherapy: Investigations in Neuromodulation, Neurofeedback and Applied Neuroscience

Editorial

Fred Johnson Publisher
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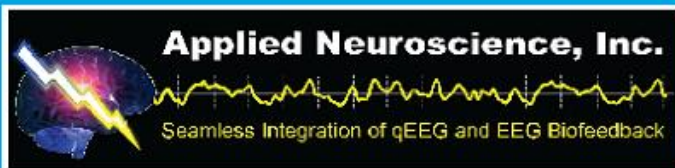
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Editorial

Fred Johnson, Publisher

We have great news this issue. First, the Society for the Study of Neuronal Regulation (SSNR) has adopted the Journal of Neurotherapy as its official publication. This new relationship between a peer-reviewed journal and a professional organization is intended to benefit both. We are very confident this will be so.

We welcome the new SSNR members who have not previously subscribed to the Journal. Welcome. We encourage our readers who are not members of the society to consider joining. According to a recent issue of the LexiGram, the fall 1997 SSNR conference was the best neurotherapy conference this year. Many of our editors have expressed this same sentiment. For more information about that conference, please refer to the conference abstracts published in this issue. For more information about SSNR, call Diana Gonzales at 713-961-5243.

Second, The American Psychological Association has advised us that they will hereafter abstract and index the Journal of Neurotherapy in Psychological Abstracts (their print product), PsycLIT (their CD-ROM product), and PsycINFO (their on-line database). In return we are sending them a couple of free subscriptions to the Journal of Neurotherapy. We are very pleased with this new relationship between the American Psychological Association and the Journal.

The Editorial Staff is ecstatic over this new development. It means the Journal is coming of age and we are being taken seriously in the scientific community. What this really says is that our peer reviewers have been doing a great job. Thank you one and all. We appreciate your valuable efforts on behalf of neurotherapy and the Journal. We are working with two other medical industry abstracting and indexing information systems, but APA PsycINFO is the first and we

will always appreciate that fact.

Third, we received many letters and telephone calls from readers thanking us for our frank discussion of photic stimulators. Many readers echoed our concern about these devices being made available to the public. Most agreed with our analysis of side effects and many related situations where clients suffered anxiety, depression, restlessness, insomnia and even seizure and other uncomfortable conditions after using photic stimulators. The research done by Dr. Marvin Sams indicates that use of these devices over several months can decrease mental effectiveness by locking the brain into a highly coherent state over several sites. The Lubar research reported in this issue raises a similar concern even with short-term usage.

We received one letter from a manufacturer of one of these devices who demanded that we retract our condemnation of photic devices. I repeat, I do not condemn them if they are properly used in a clinical setting where the client is continuously supervised and monitored by a properly trained professional. Under any other circumstances, their use is fraught with danger. By any name and under any circumstances, photic stimulators, with or without binaural sound, with or without government approval, are dangerous medical devices and should be considered just that. Potentially dangerous is potentially dangerous, and dangerous is dangerous.

Even though they are dangerous and even though they may cause some debilitating side effects, there are times when the use of these devices may be indicated. Such time is a clinical decision which should be made by a properly trained Ph.D. Psychologist or Medical Doctor. In my humble opinion, anybody else who makes this

decision is neither qualified nor well-informed and he or she is risking his or her livelihood, license, reputation and financial future.

There are three questions I would ask any manufacturer before I bought one of these commercially available photo stimulators for any reason: 1) Is it manufactured in compliance with the UL544 electrical safety code or the equivalent international standards? 2) Is it manufactured in compliance with the Medical Device Good Manufacturing Practices established to determine the safety and effectiveness of photic stimulators? and 3) Will you please give me a copy of your specifications and labeling which indicates the

equipment meets both these standards? If the answer is not a resounding "Yes" and if I do not receive written confirmation, there is no way I would risk my livelihood, reputation, license or future financial security by purchasing that device for anything except my own personal use. Right now, I'm not inclined to risk a possible seizure, anxiety, depression, irritability (more than normal), restlessness, insomnia or any other uncomfortable conditions.

The staff and editors of the Journal of Neurotherapy extend to you and yours our very best wishes for 1998. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!