

A Chance to Grow and Excel as an Associate Editor of *Pharmacological Reviews*—Editorial

Like many scientists, my first experience with *Pharmacological Reviews* began when I was a senior undergraduate student. An extensive review in such a highly reputable journal is a gold mine for a student working on a term paper or a presentation. As I continued toward graduate school, when I worked on estrogen and adrenergic receptors, I started appreciating the journal even more and have always hoped that one day I would write with the eloquence and depth of many papers in this journal. And so, it happened!

Not very long ago, I was invited to submit a paper to this journal. Knowing the bestowed honor of such an invitation, I was obviously pleased, but I also knew that this was no easy task. Having been raised to never forget those who helped me and to always appreciate mentors who carved my scientific identity, I immediately reached out to my mentor, Professor Nicholas Flavahan of Johns Hopkins University, and told him the news. He was thrilled and E-mailed me, saying “This is a cause of exceptional pride.” When I took a closer look at his E-mail, it became distinctly obvious that I was embarking on a not-so-easy task. It, nonetheless, proved to be a thrilling and rather joyful endeavor.

The write-up of our manuscript took over a year. Then came two rounds of revisions that took around another year as well. It is not surprising that this duration of two years is the longest I worked on drafting a manuscript. Importantly, the extensive comments received from the handling associate editors and reviewers were eye opening in that they were critical yet constructive, numerous but clear, and above all, they added much value to the final version of the accepted manuscript (Maaliki et al., 2024). Interestingly, two highly esteemed and critical associate editors ended up handling our paper. After receiving the first round of comments, but before submitting our point-by-point responses, the initial handling associate editor retired, and our paper was handed to another associate editor. While it may be challenging and time-consuming to appease two associate editors, especially ones of outstanding stature and extensive expertise, I considered what happened as a very good “side effect.” We could not

wish for better “luck,” where we would benefit from the meticulous comments of two senior associate editors.

A few months after the above invitation to submit, I was invited to join the editorial board as an associate editor. Once again, I reached out to Nick (Flavahan) to let him know the news and to also thank him for the training he offered me while I matriculated in his laboratory working toward my PhD. Nick was excited, happy, and proud! I was humbled to see his words when he E-mailed back, saying “You remain one of the smartest, fastest-thinking, hardest-working students I’ve ever met, and I’m delighted that the rest of the pharmacology world gets to appreciate you! I always knew you were going to have an important impact on the field of pharmacology.” Indeed, I forgot my excitement for a second after I realized that I made my mentor happy and proud! I was very pleased when I realized that Nick was delighted that his efforts in training me paid off. Perhaps I know firsthand the importance of letting one’s mentor know of one’s achievements because I myself am a passionate educator, and it is always exhilarating when we see our students excel and soar.

Although I have served and continue to serve as an associate/editor for other journals, being an associate editor for such a big journal like *Pharmacological Reviews* is a totally different ball game. We recruit highly esteemed scientists who are leading the forefront of their areas. That, by itself, is a challenge! These leaders, more often than not, are so busy with their various duties that dedicating time for a comprehensive review, like the ones we seek, presents a task that is too time consuming to consider. More challenging, or so I thought, is that I am a *new* associate editor on the journal’s board. I have embraced this role to the full and am leading the way recruiting leaders in their field to contribute to our esteemed journal.

It goes without saying that an important part of my success in this role, and relatedly of our journal, is owed to our editor-in-chief, Lynette Daws, and the big team (managing editor, management, and production teams, etc.) acting behind the scenes. It was the support, openness, and transparency with which Lynette guides the board that helped me excel. She was (and is) always willing to consider my suggestions. Importantly, she would act immediately if she realized that these suggestions could help promote the discipline of pharmacology or the journal. Getting such support will only amplify my momentum to continue exploring

Address correspondence to: Dr. Ali H. Eid, Department of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Medicine, QU Health, Doha, Qatar 2713. E-mail: ali.eid@qu.edu.qa

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new areas with which I can better serve the journal and field. For instance, Lynette recently welcomed and is acting upon my suggestions of expanding the board to include associate editors for artificial intelligence, pharmacology education, and microbial pharmacology. I do not feel that being the new kid on the block makes my contributions less valuable.

In a nutshell, being an author and associate editor for *Pharmacological Reviews* is not only an honor but is also a chance to be at the forefront of pharmacological research. It is an excellent opportunity to learn, grow, and excel. Equally importantly, it is a chance to critically analyze and hence contribute to some of the mesmerizing masterpieces that will not only serve the field but will stand the test of time as key authoritative references that would help anyone interested in pharmacology, much like it does to many graduate students (like me when I started my graduate training). As my esteemed colleague (and *Pharmacological*

Reviews associate editor) Martin Michel said in his editorial earlier this year, “You may find that you will fall in love with *Pharmacological Reviews*,” like he (and I) did a long time ago (Michel, 2024). I, therefore, welcome you to read the papers of our journal; I am confident you will enjoy each of them. Moreover, although our journal recruits papers primarily by invitation, if you have a topic in mind that you believe the pharmacology community needs to read a comprehensive review about, please feel free to reach out.

 Ali H. Eid

*Department of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Medicine,
QU Health, Doha, Qatar*

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