

FROM THE EDITOR

Thank You, Carolyn



BY BILL GLOVIN
Editor-in-Chief

Our content looked like it might finally be gradually drifting away from pandemic-related articles through the fall when, suddenly, Covid-19 came roaring back with the Omicron variant. Many of us have been infected or live in fear—who doesn't know someone who has died or come down with one variant or another? And then there's the endless controversies surrounding mandates, protocols, booster shots, virtual vs. in-person instruction, traveling—you name it.

And while Covid has certainly had a huge impact on brain research, its implications are even more impactful in the area of neuro-related disorders and mental health treatment.

That's mainly why we decided to feature two related topics in this issue. Yasmin Hurd and Timothy O'Brien—both on the frontlines of addiction research and treatment at Mount Sinai's Addiction Institute—address the reasons for an alarming rise in alcohol and drug abuse in our cover story, "A Perfect Storm." Their article tells us how the brain reacts to stress and increased isolation, and the ways public policy and addiction treatment has shifted. And you'll be glad to read that it's not all "doom and gloom."

The rise in telemedicine, and some of the disparities that have come along with it, are the focus of freelance writer Brenda Patoine's "The Great Telemedicine Experiment." Telehealth comprised a third of all visits to behavioral health specialists in 2020, a massive increase over 2019. And new datasets not yet available will tell us it has continued to rise in 2021. Turn to page 34 to find out what it all means.

There's also a lot of non-pandemic content that we hope is of interest. Randy L. Buckner, professor of psychology and neuroscience and principal investigator of the Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory at Harvard University, tells us about the accidental discovery of the default network and what we know about it 30 years later. Freelance writer Kayt Sukel looks back at the impact that the International Brain Bee has had on the lives of five finalists. Finally, photographer Cheryl St. Onge—winner of this year's Bob and Diane Fund grant—writes about the images she took of her mom and the impact Alzheimer's disease had on their relationship.

Lastly, with this issue, we bid a fond retirement to Carolyn Asbury, our in-house scientific adviser and a leading voice on the *Cerebrum* advisory board since I first joined the Foundation in 2011. Her wisdom, guidance, considerable patience, and sense of humor always kept complex, scientific principles clear and accurate, and on track. We wish her the very best as she begins this next chapter of her life.

Happy new year to all, and stay safe out there! •



EMERGING IDEAS IN BRAIN SCIENCE

Bill Glovin
Editor-in-Chief

Bruce Hanson
Art Director

Seimi Rurup
Associate Editor

Brandon Barrera
Staff Writer

Carl Sherman
Copy Editor

Carolyn Asbury, Ph.D.
Scientific Consultant

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Letters to the Editor
Cerebrum Magazine
10 Rockefeller Plaza, 16 Floor
New York, NY 10020
or cerebrum@dana.org

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that we cannot answer each one.