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Editorial

100 years of pharmacology in the Netherlands

On 2 May 2008, it will be exactly 100 years ago that the first chair in Pharmacology was created in the Netherlands. Rudolf Magnus occupied this chair after Queen Wilhelmina appointed him Professor in the Medical Faculty of the State University of Utrecht for the specialty Pharmacognosy and Pharmacodynamics. His name is still seen in the Rudolf Magnus Institute for Neurosciences of Utrecht University. Magnus' scientific work on the "steh-und stell-reflexe" attracted worldwide attention. Moreover, he introduced the bioassay technique, a technique that has played a major role in Dutch pharmacology over the years. One of his successors, David de Wied, founded the European Journal of Pharmacology in 1967.

Pharmacology is a relatively new branch of science, since the first professor of pharmacology (Rudolf Buchheim, 1820–1879) was not appointed at the University of Dorpat (Tartu), Estonia, until 1847. Pharmacology was originally a sub-specialty within the Medical Faculty, but in the last 40 years, pharmacy has also begun to pay attention not only to the preparation of a drug but also to its mode of action. Cardiovascular, respiratory and psychopharmacology are the main areas of pharmacological research in the Netherlands.

In the week of 13–16 May 2008, all universities in the Netherlands that have a chair in Pharmacology will celebrate this event. The celebrations will include a scientific symposium as well as a national public debate on drugs and a number of local festivities.

Because the European Journal of Pharmacology has its roots in the Netherlands, we have taken the initiative to ask every department of Pharmacology to contribute a few reviews concerning the activities of their institutes. This volume of the European Journal of Pharmacology presents an overview of these pharmacological activities in the Netherlands.

Willem Hendrik Gispen

Frans P. Nijkamp

E-mail address: w.h.gispen@uu.nl (W.H. Gispen).