

Artificial intelligence and natural imagination

April 2, the day we are writing this editorial and finalizing this issue of the Belgian Journal of Paediatrics, is the International Children's Book Day. This event exists since 1967 and is celebrated on the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen, the famous Danish storyteller. The goal of this initiative was to fight against illiteracy by transmitting the taste for reading. Through this editorial and the cover by Serge Ernst, we want to join this celebration. We want to highlight the pleasure and the benefits that books can bring to the child's development and to promote place we give to imagination and creativity.

In 2023, artificial intelligence (AI) and the famous ChatGPT are making the headlines of many newspapers. This system exploits vast amounts of text data, such as news articles, books, and online conversations to develop a predictive analysis of language that makes it capable of generating text and answer based on the context and the intention of the interlocutor. While the efficiency and the possibilities offered by this system are praised, more than 1100 experts in the field ask for a moratorium on the AI based developments. They denounce an uncontrolled race to develop and deploy ever more powerful AI systems that no one, not even their creators, can reliably understand, predict or control. In an open letter, they raise questions about the relationship between humans and machines: *"Should we automate all tasks, including fulfilling ones? Should we develop non-human brains that could eventually be more numerous, more intelligent, [...] and replace us? Should we risk losing control of our civilization?"*

We certainly need to consider the place we give to machines and how they can be instrumental in our future lives, but we must also make sure to keep and to nurture our ability and our freedom to create, to imagine, to innovate. Human beings organize themselves and evolve based on analytical thinking, on a logic built on observation and previous personal and historical learning and experiences. This ability has allowed us to make great advances and to give the human species a privileged place on earth. We must also recognize the contribution of another form of consciousness in our collective development and personal balance. Our perception of the outside world and of ourselves depends also on imagination, a way of thinking that is less linked to the space-time dimensions and is more related to emotions and intuitions. Imagination is natural and innate. It is present in children, and they switch very easily from one mode of thinking to the other. All of us, as pediatricians or parents, have seen for instance, children playing with plastic plates as if they had suddenly become great cooks. In care, we also appreciate how this imagination can be a resource that help to overcome the challenges of illness, hospitalization, or treatment. At a personal level, we also have experienced how an evening at the movies or simply reading a good book can help us to take a step back, gain perspective, and inspire us in our daily lives. On a broader scale, the ability to step outside of pre-established logic, to approach a situation or a problem differently, is recognized as a source of innovation and progress. To take an example from psychiatrist and explorer Bertrand Picard: *"In the field of lighting, it was not the candle makers who invented the light bulb"*.

Creativity is the first point that Pierre Smeesters develops in his Insights article on research in Belgium. Through 6 "Be" tips, he gives interesting perspectives to increase the chances of founding and success in the research process. Two original studies are also published in this issue: a matched case control study about neurodevelopmental outcome of preterm infants with isolated intraventricular hemorrhage by Jantien Dewulf and colleagues and an analysis of knowledge and attitude of primary school students towards pediculosis capitis by Myrten Daenen and Jaan Toelen. We are also proud to report several clinical cases described by colleagues from all over the Belgian pediatric community: a late onset neonatal candida albicans osteomyelitis and arthritis, an acquired primary hypothyroidism with profound anemia in an adolescent girl, an autoimmune pancreatitis, a familial chronic metallic mercury intoxication due to a broken sphygmomanometer and a complicated meningitis caused by Haemophilus Influenzae serotype A. Our "Made in Belgium" section summarized the Ph.D thesis of Marie-Line M. van der Poorten (University of Antwerp) about the optimization of drug hypersensitivity diagnosis. In front of this increasing health problem, she further investigated the cut-off of specific Ig E quantification and the optimal modalities for skin tests and drug provocation test. The Paediatric Cochrane Corner discusses the prognosis of first unprovoked seizures.

We also take the opportunity of this editorial to congratulate and thank the organizing scientific committee of the 51st edition of the annual SBP/BVK congress. The team chaired by prof Inge Gies, UZ Brussels, set up a very attractive and varied program with the challenging central theme: "Climate Changes in Pediatrics: from Society to Environment". We thank the participants, speakers, and all contributors to this great annual event.

In our next edition, we will highlight some of the scientific achievements of the BVK/SBP, officially founded one hundred years ago, on Sunday January 14th 1923. History is indeed the memory of our civilization and helps us to reflect nuanced about the present and the future, not only of our profession but of our life in general.

We wish you an enjoyable reading of this issue of the Belgian Journal of Paediatrics. We hope that it will contribute to stimulate your pediatric knowledge and creativity!

Christophe Chantrain and Marc Raes

Uw vragen of commentaar
Vos questions ou commentaires



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