

Editorial

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Information overload? Take the 'Progress and Prospects' cure

If there is one complaint you hear from all biomedical researchers, immunologists to dermatologists, geneticists to neuroscientists, it is that there are simply too many publications to keep up with. Information overload is a 21st century pandemic not limited to researchers, but it does seem, at least from the inside, that we are particularly badly afflicted.

One group possibly even worse off than biomedical researchers are the clinicians charged with translating the research into treatments. Those that rely on journals to keep up-to-date with the latest treatment options in their specialty, or interested in what may be just around the corner, have an almost impossible task. As well as doing the 'day job' they have to monitor an increasingly bewildering plethora of journals to be sure of getting all relevant articles. Of course Medline is an invaluable tool for monitoring progress in your field, but unfortunately it still cannot read the articles for you!

Clinicians and researchers interested in gene therapy are perhaps worse off in terms of information overload than most. The sheer breadth of the field and the diversity of its potential applicability mean that papers relevant to this audience can appear in an amazingly wide range of journals. Journals focusing on physiology, virology, anatomy and biochemistry are typically cited in gene therapy papers. With five primary research journals devoted to the field, and many others such as *Science*, *PNAS* and our fellow Nature Publishing Group journals *Nature*, *Nature Medicine* and *Nature Biotechnology* publishing top quality gene therapy research, there are greater than 100 relevant papers published a month.

Of course many excellent reviews on gene therapy-related topics are published in less-specialised journals. The

problem is that most of the time busy clinicians and researchers don't need a comprehensive review that covers every paper ever published on a particular topic – they just need an update of the latest progress in the specific area they are interested in and a succinct, expert summary of where the research is heading.

In this issue of *Gene Therapy* we are publishing the first of a series, that we believe provides the cure to gene therapy information overload (the mythical 'magic bullet' if you like!): *Gene Therapy Progress and Prospects*. Each Progress and Prospects review, to be published monthly in even-numbered issues of the journal, will provide a succinct summary of the last 2 years of progress in a specific aspect of gene therapy research and will highlight prospects for the next 2 years. Written by the leaders in the field, the concise, targeted content will cover the most significant as well as the 'hottest' topics. From identifying potential target diseases to the vectors, technologies and systems being developed to detect efficiency, the whole range of the field will be covered. The Progress and Prospects format has been specifically designed to be reader-friendly, including a bulleted section that allows a quick snapshot of the Progress and Prospects as the expert authors see them.

The Progress and Prospects series will be administered by one of our Associate Editors, Professor Eric Alton, ably assisted by Dr Uta Griesenbach and Dr Stefano Ferrari. These three, together with their colleague Dr Duncan Geddes, co-authored the first Progress and Prospects review on cystic fibrosis published in this issue.

We hope the readers of *Gene Therapy* find this new series as useful as we think it will be. Indeed we hope many new readers are attracted to the journal through this unique addition.

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