

future will depend on how well it can compete not only with these specialist journals but also with its many rivals (such as *Cellular Signalling*, *J. Neuroendocrinology*, *Endocrinology*, *Acta Endocrinologica*, *J. Endocrinology*, *Molecular Endocrinology*, *Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology*, *Endocrine Research*, *J. Receptor Research*, *Biofactors*, *Neuropeptides and Regulatory Peptides*) which also attempt to cover signalling in a more general way. It is amazing just how ingenious publishers have been in finding titles for journals on cell signalling.

In addition to those already mentioned, *Biological Signals* will be competing with its stable companions *Neuroendocrinology* and *Hormone Research*. In fact, at least half of the 35 papers appearing in the first volume would have been equally at home in *Neuroendocrinology*. These papers deal mainly with the characterization of hormones and their receptors. Some of the other papers are concerned with various transduction processes (the action of G proteins and the release of stored calcium), and the signals responsible for stimulating cell growth are also represented. So far, however, the content is heavily biased towards classical endocrinology.

## Anatomy on the move

Cheryll Tickle

**Developmental Dynamics.** Editor-in-chief Paul F. Goetinck. Wiley. 12/yr. USA \$1,135, Canada and Mexico \$1,255, elsewhere \$1,300.

CLASSICAL embryology and descriptive morphological anatomy spawned modern developmental biology. The American Association of Anatomy has recognized this new offspring and has bravely launched *Developmental Dynamics* to take the place of the *American Journal of Anatomy*. The leading articles and general planning of the new journal give the impression of a change for the better that has been entered into enthusiastically. It would therefore be churlish not to wish this venture well.

The title was presumably chosen to convey the essential movement and change that is so typical of embryos. Also it contrasts with the static images often conjured up by the word 'anatomy'. The journal features papers that describe the types of work that are now commonplace in anatomy departments. One may come across descriptive papers about neural crest migration or find details about the control elements of a homeobox gene. The work may involve zebra fish, *Drosophila* or rats and mice, although plants do not fall within the remit. The journal

The editors have put together an impressive editorial board drawn from many disciplines, thus reflecting the wide scope of the journal. As might be expected for a new journal, the board members have contributed more than half of the papers in the first volume. Although it is hoped that they will continue to support this new venture, the success of *Biological Signals* will depend on its ability to attract good papers from outside contributors. So far, the papers are of a reasonably high standard and are beautifully produced. The type is large, making it easy to read, and the halftones give the journal a pleasing uniformity by being set against a stippled background. Unfortunately, the much hated numbering system, which lists references in order of their appearance, makes it difficult to identify whether specific references are present.

Most librarians, however, may think twice about ordering *Biological Signals*, especially since the contents of this somewhat slim journal may well be covered by others already sitting on the stacks. □

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has also commissioned reviews and instituted a series of reprints of embryology classics. (The first in the series, V. Hamburger and H. L. Hamilton's article on the stages of chicken development, provided a welcome opportunity to replace worn-out photocopies.)

Is there a need for another journal devoted to developmental biology? It is certainly true that the two main journals devoted exclusively to developmental problems and embryos, *Development* and *Developmental Biology*, seem to be increasingly pressed for space. So another outlet for this rapidly expanding and exciting field could be useful. But it is difficult to see any precise niche that will be uniquely filled by *Developmental Dynamics*. The journal seems to match existing standards of speed and production, and it offers authors a free colour plate, bringing it into direct competition with more established journals. It is certain that in one sense of the phrase, anatomy needs *Developmental Dynamics*, but we will have to wait and see whether developmental biologists need it. □

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## Engulfing fields

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**Mediators of Inflammation.** Editor-in-chief I. L. Bonta. Rapid Communications of Oxford. 6/yr. £240, \$409 (institutional); £90, \$150 (personal).

*MEDIATORS OF INFLAMMATION* presumably hopes to engulf much of the experimental work on the inflammatory process by soliciting papers from many scientific areas, including immunology, pharmacology, biochemistry and cell biology. It also intends to publish clinical contributions. A reasonable mixture of disciplines is indeed well represented. This is one of the strengths of the journal.

With many even more specialized journals now available, each of which focuses on a distinct discipline or on a particular class of inflammatory mediator such as the prostanoids, leukotrienes or cytokines, the advantage of such a multidisciplinary journal is readily apparent. Moreover, the journal can expect to flourish even when individual mediators fall from fashion (as they inevitably do) and are replaced by new families of biologically active substances (followed rapidly by the appearance of a related specialist journal).

The nature and breadth of recent contributions are healthy for such a young journal. The scientific standard, however, is variable, perhaps reflecting the differences in rigour of the various disciplines as much as a slack editorial policy. Still, this should not excuse the lack of statistical evaluation in some of the papers appearing over the past year. Very few of the latest papers fall far short of a fully worthwhile standard, however. The invited reviews are useful.

One of the selling points of the journal is its goal of rapid publication, aimed at 90 days. Although the speed varied in the earlier issues, the most recent issue contains papers published well within the intended time. The style, layout and typeface are attractive and the quality of reproduction of figures and original photomicrographs is excellent. The personal subscription rate is not too excessive. Affiliation of the journal with an appropriate scientific society might be an effective way of ensuring wider distribution.

The journal should fill a worthwhile place on the shelves of those interested in any aspect of the mediators of inflammation. Competition for really excellent papers will, however, be fierce. □

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