

nature immunology

volume 1 no 1 july 2000

Birth of a journal

Welcome, readers, to the first issue of *Nature Immunology*, the newest kid on the block. With the support of the Nature Publishing Group's expertise at publishing top tier journals, immunologists finally have a *Nature* "sister" journal that they can call their own.

Immunology is served by a number of good, solid, well established journals. In fact, the field is so well covered that as *Nature's* publishers were looking for opportunities to provide investigators with journals that served their communities, immunology seemed to fall below their radar screen. The exploding fields of molecular biology and genetics and the push to sequence every base pair in existence made the decision to launch *Nature Genetics* a no-brainer. *Nature Medicine* was equally successful at attracting papers and finding its place in its community of biomedical researchers. Rapidly following these successes came the launches of *Nature Structural Biology*, *Nature Biotechnology* (a relaunch), *Nature Neuroscience* and *Nature Cell Biology*.

While this flurry of activity was going on, it appeared to some that immunology was being ignored. But the Nature Publishing Group was quietly amassing reams of survey and focus group data to help determine the need for and viability of a *Nature* sister journal for the immunologists. The conclusion was that immunologists wanted a journal that combined the best immunology research with a good "front end" filled with News and Views, commentary on the issues that concern them and opinions from experts who create the environment in which we do our science. Immunologists wanted a top-quality international journal whose papers were chosen through a fair and unbiased review system, open to all investigators and all aspects of immunology. The Nature Publishing Group saw here a need that they could readily fill. At last we immunologists were going to get our journal.

Of course, *Nature Immunology* and *Nature* are editorially independent. *Nature's* interest in superb immunology of the broadest interest to the general reader of *Nature* is unabated and its publishing policies remain unchanged (visit <http://www.nature.com/nature/author/natureguide.html>). But now you can join us at *Nature Immunology* to help generate the best immunology journal in the world. The quality of submissions has been heartening, as the community already understands the kind of journal we aim to publish.

What areas can you expect to see represented in these pages? If you have seen our slogan, "Immunology. All of it.", you know the answer. The beauty of immunology is that one can investigate the system at any level and make

a contribution to the overall understanding of how our immune system works. One of the reasons that many of us are so enamored of the area is that immunology has always been driven by fundamentally interesting questions. How do we acquire an state of immunity to microorganisms, why do we not normally set up immune responses to our own constituents and why is it that at times the immune system either overreacts or never gets going? What are the relationships between immunity and cancer, between innate and acquired immunity, between all of the cells, cytokines and systems that work together to protect the organism as a whole? How do the details of gene recombination, transcription, antigen receptors, protein kinesis, proliferation and cell death help to answer some of the larger questions in immunology? How did the immune system evolve? What happens to our immune systems as we age? Can we develop more and better vaccines and immunotherapies?

As you can see, we have all of the sections that you expected from a *Nature* journal, from News and Views and Commentary to basic research articles. In our Correspondence section we will be publishing not only thoughtful short contributions that individuals may have concerning policy, funding, or immunology in general, but also the comments of our readers on the papers that we publish, along with a response from the original author. Our Roundup section provides concise summaries of interesting papers that have appeared elsewhere in the literature, simplifying your efforts to stay informed.

Just how are papers for *Nature Immunology* selected? We read each manuscript as it arrives and then determine suitability for in-depth review on the basis of whether it fits our scope, whether the advance described is significant, and whether it will be of outstanding interest to the immunology community. To aid in this important decision we gather information from various sources, including contacting trusted pre-eminent investigators in the area. Reviewers are selected based on recommendations, our experience and to preserve the objective nature of the review; authors should indicate possible conflicts in their submission letter. Final decisions on manuscripts will be made taking into consideration the thoughtful analyses of our referees.

As this first issue shows, we are already receiving high quality papers on interesting and important topics. We thank the authors and the referees of these papers for all of their help in launching our new journal. Enjoy the fruits of their labors. We envision many more of you becoming a part of this process soon.