

Editorial

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Overview

With the close of 2006, the third year for this editorial team is now complete. During this 3-year period of time we have received 1,881 original manuscripts for review, and have published 400 papers. These published papers have given major new insights into mechanisms of carcinogenesis and autoimmune disease, and the behavior of cancer in human tissues. They have explored the regulatory mechanisms of healthy and diseased tissues, and the mechanisms by which chronic diseases destroy human tissues. Exciting new animal models of disease have been established, and the biological properties of disease-relevant macromolecules have been defined. Our policy of publishing full-length major technical reports also has been successful, with high impact papers defining optimized conditions for antigen preservation in preserved human tissues, providing thorough characterization of ‘housekeeping genes’ for microarray systems, and major improvements in multiplex analysis of mutations in proteins, among many examples. We have judiciously published critical review articles, with the intent of providing significant new insights into disease process that are not readily evident from perusal of the primary literature. Lastly, a new ‘Pathobiology in Focus’ feature was launched in 2006; it is intended to be a critical appraisal of major research initiatives at the forefront of biomedical research.

The journal has undergone a ‘renaissance’ during this period of time. From an operational standpoint, our foremost priority is to serve the authors submitting their manuscripts for review. For the entirety of these 3 years, our average time-to-initial-decision has been in the 11–13 day range. This average reflects the fact that an initial editorial assessment is made at the time of submission, to determine whether the submitted manuscript: (a) falls within the scope of the journal (mechanisms of disease); and/or (b) is of sufficient priority for further scientific review. An initial decision to reject on the basis of failing to meet the first or second criteria is made on approximately 54% of submitted manuscripts, with decision time usually within 5 days of submission. For papers selected for full scientific review, an initial decision is almost always made within 30 days, with average time-to-initial-decision of 28 days. Overall ‘processing time’ in the editorial office, both front end and back end, is usually less than 5 calendar days. In this manner, we can serve authors in the timeliest fashion, ensuring that they can pursue the highest probability course for

eventual publication of their work. Finally, for those papers undergoing full scientific review in the year 2006, 37% (overall acceptance rate 17%) were eventually accepted for publication, in almost all instances involving recommendations for revision or enhancement.

These performance standards, in combination with a steady strengthening in the scientific quality of submitted manuscripts, have enabled us to publish consistently high-quality papers, which are received well in the published literature. In the 1999–2003 timeframe, the ‘Impact Factor’ for this journal was in the 4.5–3.9 range. The ‘Impact Factor’ for 2004 was published in July, 2005, and reflected 2004 citations of articles published in the 2 years immediately before our editorship (2002, 2003). This 2004 Impact Factor was 3.702. The 2005 Impact Factor, published in July 2006, reflects 2005 citations of articles published in 2003 and 2004 (the first year of our editorship); this Impact Factor was 3.859. Over these past 3 years our editorial office has established a weekly ‘ticker tape’ of Impact Factor status. At the time of writing this editorial (6 October 2006), the 2007 Impact Factor is tracking a full 0.4 points ahead of the 2006 Impact Factor at this time. Hence, we anticipate that a substantial rebound of Impact Factor is likely for the July 2007 report.

We are indebted to the members of the Editorial Board, and to a broad base of external reviewers, who have supported this journal over the past year. The names of all individuals who have reviewed manuscripts are given at the end of this editorial.

2006 Specifics

There is value in reflecting upon articles drawing the greatest attention from the reading public. Table 1 gives the top 10 articles accessed from the web in the form of HTML or PDF downloads, for January–August 2006. The top article (authors Dauphinee and Karsan) is a review entitled ‘Lipopolysaccharide signaling in endothelial cells’ with 2.126 hits. The second article (by Yu and Fu) is also a review, ‘Tumor-infiltrating T lymphocytes: friends or foes?’ Of the remaining eight articles, one is from the newly launched ‘Pathobiology in Focus’ series, one is a review article, two are technical reports, and four are original research articles exploring stem cell biology (two papers), vascular development, and immunology. Table 2 gives the top 10 articles from 2005 cited in the literature. The cited topics range from analysis of serum proteins by SELDI mass

Table 1 Top 10 articles downloaded as HTML or PDF files, January–August 2006

Rank	Authors	Title	Year, volume, pages
1	Dauphinee SM, Karsan A	Lipopolysaccharide signaling in endothelial cells	2006;86:9–22
2	Yu P, Fu YX	Tumor-infiltrating T lymphocytes: friends or foes?	2006;86:231–245
3	Barnes PJ	Transcription factors in airway diseases	2006;86:867–872
4	Seeberger KL, Dufour JM, Shapiro AM, Lakey JR, Rajotte RV, Korbitt GS	Expansion of mesenchymal stem cells from human pancreatic ductal epithelium	2006;86:141–153
5	Nayernia K, Lee JH, Drusenheimer N, Nolte J, Wulf G, Dressel R, Gromoll J, Engel W	Derivation of male germ cells from bone marrow stem cells	2006;86:654–663
6	de Kok JB, Roelofs RW, Giesendorf BA, Pennings JL, Waas ET, Feuth T, Swinkels DW, Span PN	Normalization of gene expression measurements in tumor tissues: comparison of 13 endogenous control genes	2005;85:154–159
7	Cunningham KS, Gotlieb AI	The role of shear stress in the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis	2005;85:9–23
8	Micke P, Ohshima M, Tahmasebpoor S, Ren ZP, Ostman A, Ponten F, Botling J	Biobanking of fresh frozen tissue: RNA is stable in nonfixed surgical specimens	2006;86:202–211
9	Seki T, Hong KH, Oh SP	Nonoverlapping expression patterns of ALK1 and ALK5 reveal distinct roles of each receptor in vascular development	2006;86:116–129
10	Ocklenburg F, Moharreggh-Khiabani D, Geffers R, Janke V, Pfoertner S, Garritsen H, Groebe L, Klempnauer J, Dittmar KE, Weiss S, Buer J, Probst-Kepper M	UBD, a downstream element of FOXP3, allows the identification of LGALS3, a new marker of human regulatory T cells	2006;86:724–737

Table 2 Top 10 cited articles published in 2005, through September 2006

Rank	Authors	Title	Year, volume, pages
1	Cunningham KS, Gotlieb AI	The role of shear stress in the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis	2005;85:9–23
2	de Kok JB, Roelofs RW, Giesendorf BA, Pennings JL, Waas ET, Feuth T, Swinkels DW, Span PN	Normalization of gene expression measurements in tumor tissues: comparison of 13 endogenous control genes	2005;85:154–159
3	Pan JM, Wang Q, Snell WJ	Cilium-generated signaling and cilia-related disorders	2005;85:452–463
4 (tie)	Takii Y, Nakamura M, Ito M, Yokoyama T, Komori A, Shimizu-Yoshida YK, Nakao R, Kusumoto K, Nagaoka S, Yano K, Abiru S, Ueki T, Matsumoto T, Daikoku M, Taniguchi K, Fujioka H, Migita K, Yasuhashi H, Nakashima M, Harada M, Ishibashi H	Enhanced expression of type I interferon and toll-like receptor-3 in primary biliary cirrhosis	2005;85:908–920
4 (tie)	Zhou WH, Inada M, Lee TP, Benten D, Lyubsky S, Bouhassira EE, Gupta SJ, Tsai HM	ADAMTS13 is expressed in hepatic stellate cells	2005;85:780–788
5	Schoeffner DJ, Matheny SL, Akahane T, Factor V, Berry A, Merlino G, Thorgerirsson UP	VEGF contributes to mammary tumor growth in transgenic mice through paracrine and autocrine mechanisms	2005;85:608–623
6 (tie)	Sabatini F, Petecchia L, Tavian M, de Villeroche VJ, Rossi GA, Brouty-Boye D	Human bronchial fibroblasts exhibit a mesenchymal stem cell phenotype and multilineage differentiating potentialities	2005;85:962–971
6 (tie)	Beckner ME, Chen X, An JY, Day BW, Pollack IF	Proteomic characterization of harvested pseudopodia with differential gel electrophoresis and specific antibodies	2005;85:316–327
6 (tie)	Ciccocioppo R, Di Sabatino A, Bauer M, Della Riccia DN, Bizzini F, Biagi F, Cifone MG, Corazza GR, Schuppan D	Matrix metalloproteinase pattern in celiac duodenal mucosa	2005;85:397–407
(tie)	Zhang QH, Davenport JR, Croyle MJ, Haycraft CJ, Yoder BK	Disruption of IFT results in both exocrine and endocrine abnormalities in the pancreas of Tg737(orpk) mutant mice	2005;85:45–64

spectrometry, molecular analysis of human cancers and technical analysis of gene expression in tumor tissues. Interestingly, three technical reports also are among the top 10 cited articles, as are 3 reviews. Not shown are the remaining papers making up our 'top 50'. In total, 4 reviews, 5 technical reports, and 41 original research articles comprise the top 50 cited papers.

We draw several conclusions. First, the high volume of web downloads makes it clear that the scientific world turns to the web for access to the published literature. This underscores the value of electronic subscriptions to the scientific literature (and we are working to ensure that all major academic institutions have an electronic subscription to this journal). Second, published articles addressing molecular mechanisms of carcinogenesis are highly read—and this journal addresses the breadth of human and animal carcinogenesis. Third, mechanisms of tissue injury and response also are important, again across the panoply of mammalian tissues. Fourth, technical reports and critical reviews are of high value. The attention given to our technical reports is particular affirmation of our philosophy of publishing full-length papers, with detailed and rigorous reporting of data validating the reported methodology. Lastly, our fundamental premise is supported: that the publication of original research papers is the foundation for the journal. The strengthening of journal posture is predominantly the result of the broad base of excellent original papers we have been privileged to publish in the 2004–2006 timeframe.

In 2006 (volume 86), we have published 112 articles across the broad spectrum of human and animal disease. Fifty-one per cent of the articles were studies of human tissues; 49% were animal studies (ignoring the occasional article which utilizes both human and animal tissues). Studies of cancer totaled 19%; of noncancer topics 81%. There is a broad distribution across essentially all organ systems, with the liver (14%), cardiovascular system (10%), kidney (9%) and gut (9%) well represented. The hematopoietic and lymphoid system (7%), brain (5%) and prostate/genitourinary (5%) comprise a mid-frequency group. We remain interested in increasing the number of articles we publish in the categories of pancreas, breast and endocrine (currently each representing 3% or less of 2006 published articles). Molecular pathology studies not specific to an organ system (13%) and Technical Reports (11%) also make strong contributions to the journal. Overall, these publication

numbers reflect both the broad distribution of submitted articles, and the high quality of submitted articles in each potential category.

The Future

The 'features' of this journal under our editorship have included 'Pathology Elsewhere' (2004–2005), constituting editorial summaries of key original articles published elsewhere, and 'Inside Laboratory Investigation' (2004–present), which are editorial introductions to highlighted articles in each issue. The new 'Pathobiology in Focus' feature was initiated in August 2006. We thank the special Editorial Group that directs the latter feature, headed by Jerrold R Turner, MD, PhD, and fully listed on the masthead as Section Editors.

With the February issue of 2007 (Vol. 87, Issue 2), a major revision in the graphics for this journal will occur. In addition to modest alterations in the cover of the journal, there will be a major upgrade in the interior graphics. Beginning with the table of contents and continuing into 'Inside Lab Invest' and 'nature.com/pathology', there will be greater graphical highlighting of articles published in each issue. The header style of the different paper types (Critical Reviews, Pathobiology in Focus, and Original Articles) also will be modified to enhance ready identification of these *Laboratory Investigation* articles. We are happy to report that we will retain the banner blue color for the journal, both for the cover and the interior pages.

These changes are intended to enhance the continued upward trajectory of this journal. Ultimately, however, the quality of this journal will depend upon the excellence of submitted articles. We seek 'the best' in original research devoted to understanding the mechanisms of disease. This includes work in human tissues and with experimental models, both *in vivo* and *in vitro*. We welcome original reports of important experimental models for disease, and of major technical advances of broad impact to research into disease pathogenesis. We welcome suggestions for critical reviews or novel 'Pathobiology in Focus' reports. Lastly, this journal can be an organ for occasional Editorial Perspectives on the status of pathology research.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve you, and look forward to the coming year.

James M Crawford, MD, PhD
Editor-in-Chief

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