

MOLECULAR THERAPY

*The Journal of the American
Society of Gene Therapy*

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A New Year and a Renewed Mission

This issue of *Molecular Therapy* marks the 5th anniversary of the journal and represents the transition from the inaugural Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Inder Verma, to myself. Inder's impact cannot be understated, and the journal's success is due in no small measure to his leadership in these formative years. Aided by the outstanding work of Editors Fintan Steele initially and, since 2002, Rob Frederickson, Inder laid the foundation for a highly cited, respected journal in the field of gene therapy.

How successful has the journal been to date? Here are some measures of success. Submissions peaked in 2004, and are poised to reach 650 by the end of the year, an increase of approximately 25% over 2003. Much of the growth is from the international scientific community, as the journal's reputation extends beyond the US. To accommodate this increase in submissions, the journal has published increasing numbers of pages (1245 in 2002 versus 2111 in 2004), while at the same time increasing the quality of the published articles. The current acceptance rate is approaching 25% of submitted articles. *Molecular Therapy's* impact factor has surpassed 6, with further increases anticipated due to the initiation of a review series that got into full swing this year. We anticipate continuing to publish about two reviews in each issue. *Molecular Therapy* has thus emerged as the dominant journal in the field of gene therapy.

A major contributing factor to the success of the journal and its acceptance by authors is the rapid turn-around time for article reviews. Time from submission to first decision is twenty-five days. This short turn around is sustained by outstanding contributions of the Editorial Board and Associate Editors, organized and led by Rob Frederickson. We thank them for their participation and contributions. Rob's approach to reviews and his willingness to work with both authors and reviewers in a constructive fashion is rather unique in my experience in academic publishing. These impressive accomplishments have also been aided by the American Society of Gene Therapy and the publisher, Academic Press (now Elsevier).

Where do we go from here? We welcome this year's new additions to the Editorial Board and the roster of Associate Editors. The field of gene transfer continues to evolve, and we have attempted to bring new expertise to the journal to reflect this evolution. The pace of human gene therapy trials, while facing increasing regulatory oversight and newly identified side effects, will certainly accelerate. The use of inhibitory RNA approaches will clearly require a variety of delivery systems. Newer, safer vector designs will be derived from a better understanding of the molecular events associated with insertional mutagenesis. Finally, the use of small molecules to inhibit gene function will almost certainly expand both in the laboratory and clinical settings, and we intend to feature this approach in future issues of *Molecular Therapy*. From a practical standpoint, we will work to reduce further the time to initial decision and to make the review process both constructive and efficient. We anticipate increased involvement of Associate Editors in this process. Overall, we see a strong future for the journal to promote research, development and application of gene transfer and other molecular manipulations in the evolving basic understanding of gene function and therapeutic options in the clinic.

In addition to Inder and Rob, I would like to thank all of you who have supported the society and the journal with subscriptions and submissions during the past five years. I believe the quality of the journal—which in many ways reflects the quality of the science in the field—will improve over the next five years. I hope you consider sending your very best science to *Molecular Therapy* in the upcoming year. I believe you will be pleased with both the process and the final product.

DAVID A. WILLIAMS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF