

New Journals review 1993

CRITERIA for journals to be considered for review in this issue were circulated to publishers earlier this year, and were also published in *Nature*. They were that:

- (1) the first number appeared during or after June 1991 and at least four separate numbers were issued by the end of April 1993 (although some of the journals eligible for, but not covered in, last year's review issue were also considered)*;
- (2) the journal is published at least three times a year;
- (3) the main language used is English;
- (4) where possible, at least four issues should be made available for review, including the first and the most recent numbers.

The time criteria ensure that a reasonable sample of issues is available for judgement by the time reviews are commissioned.

Several journals known to satisfy the criteria were not submitted for review, or arrived too late for inclusion. It proved difficult to find reviewers for other, doubtless worthy journals, while some titles were considered to be of marginal interest to *Nature's* audience. Journals covering any aspect of science were eligible, although those dealing with clinical medicine, engineering and pure mathematics were excluded, as were abstracts publications and newsletters. A list of titles eligible for review but not covered appears on page 589.

The brief given to the reviewers was to limit themselves to comments on the publications sent to them, and to avoid discussion of general questions of periodical publishing. Opinions expressed in the reviews are based on a sample of issues, and apply to mid-1993 at the latest. As in previous years, the preponderance of journals in the biological sciences reflects the bias of material submitted.

Details of editors and frequency of publication, and the subscription rates appearing at the top of each review, are given in most instances for 1994. This information is not complete in all cases, and readers interested in subscribing to a particular journal should check the rate with the publisher concerned. □

* See *Nature* 359, 435–464 (1992); 353, 457–481 (1991); 347, 581–599 (1990); 341, 350–370 (1989); 335, 459–478 (1988); 329, 357–376 (1987); 323, 359–379 (1986); 317, 293–308 (1985); 311, 309–330 (1984); and 305, 477–497 (1983).

Triplet expansions

Bert Vogelstein

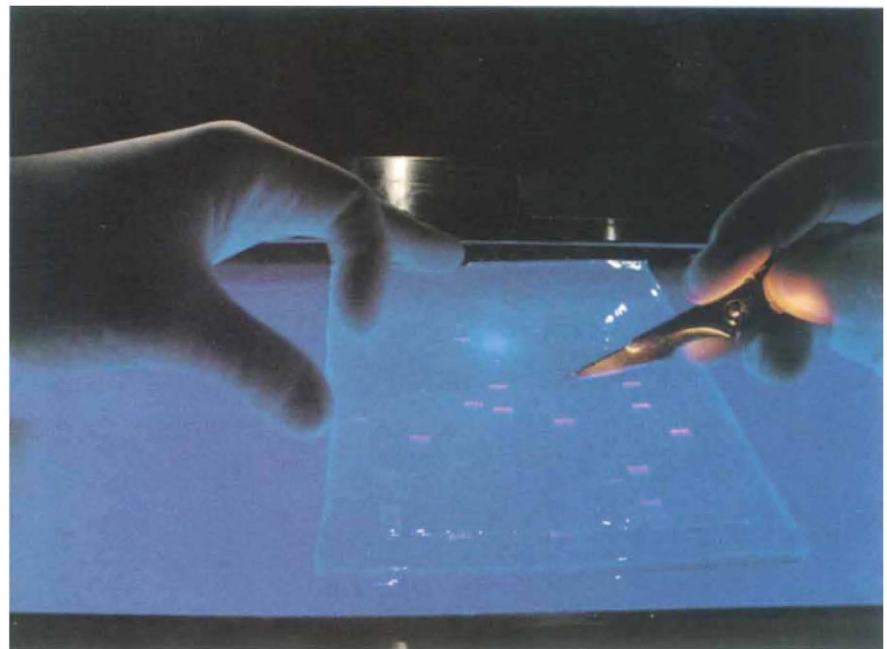
Nature Genetics. Editor Kevin Davies. *Nature Publishing, New York.* 12/yr. USA and Canada \$495, UK £350 (institutional); USA and Canada \$195, UK £175 (personal).

Human Molecular Genetics. Editors Kay E. Davies and Huntington F. Willard. IRL/Oxford University Press. 12/yr. Europe £250, elsewhere \$435 (institutional); Europe £80, elsewhere \$140 (personal).

Human Mutation. Editors R. G. H. Cotton and Haig H. Kazazian Jr. Wiley. 8/yr. USA \$250, Canada and Mexico \$330, elsewhere \$360 (institutional); USA, Canada and Mexico \$125, elsewhere \$165 (personal).

As an avid and somewhat compulsive reader of the literature, I generally wince at the publication of a new journal — yet more pages to turn, more data to imbibe. But in some fields, new technological developments make new journals imperative, simply because the volume of data becomes too great for established journals to handle. Such is clearly the case in

responsible for various conditions, *Nature Genetics* also provides a substantial amount of biological and conceptual information about genetic disease. Its papers seem to be carefully selected, especially in recent issues, and a considerable proportion of them present seminal, rather than follow-up, studies. Particularly appealing has been the



Peter Ginter

The cutting edge — separation of protein by gel electrophoresis. This award-winning photograph appears in *World Press Photo 1993* (Thames and Hudson, £8.95).

genetics, human genetics in particular, where the number of mutations discovered to cause disease is rising exponentially. Part of this rise can be traced to an exponential technique — the polymerase chain reaction, which makes it possible to identify mutations with a speed that was unimaginable even a few years ago. Because these mutations provide new insights into the pathogenesis of various diseases, papers describing them have become instrumental in several fields, most notably the study of hereditary diseases and cancer.

A triplet of new journals has been born on this basis. *Nature Genetics*, a spin-off of *Nature*, is a superb entry. Although, as expected, it describes the mutations re-

thematic grouping, with two or four papers on a similar topic clustered in a single issue. Past issues have thus included clusters presenting ground-breaking studies on Menkes, Charcot-Marie-Tooth and Alzheimer's diseases. Similarly, several issues have contained collections of papers on the triple-repeat expansions characteristic of fragile X syndrome, myotonic dystrophy and Huntington's disease. The papers on triplet repeats cover technical, biological, clinical and genetic aspects, and are required reading for anyone interested in this burgeoning topic. Most articles are of nearly ideal length — short enough to be carefully read, long enough to contain adequate experimental detail. The journal's accom-