

lent; H. Schellekens on mitochondrial DNA and P. K. Vogt on oncogenes are two examples that I found crisp and illuminating. There are also interviews with important personages — Nobel laureates, journal editors and the like. This is a difficult genre, and here (at least to my mind) only moderately successful, for there are too few surprising revelations and no outrageous opinions are ventilated. Book reviews too suffer from a certain decorum (does Gallo have to be treated with quite such servility?). A few errors have slipped through undetected: Chaim Weizmann, for instance, should not have been allowed to pass as a colleague of Pasteur's.

But it is ungrateful to cavil where there is so much to enjoy. There are rewarding pieces by experts on such topics as the great medical illustrators, on alchemy, Taoist physiology, Vesalius, Willem de Kooning and Frank Lloyd Wright. The distinguished author of the last — not a scientist — does not remark on the helical fine-structure of the Guggenheim Museum in New York, prominently on view in two sumptuous photographs. Wright, incidentally, also had something to say on clinical science: doctors, he observed, can always bury their mistakes, but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines.

It remains only to ask Amgen how they will select the lucky recipients of their covetable confection. Beg a subscription if you can! □

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Powerful knowledge

Susan Michie

Journal of Genetic Counseling. Editor-in-chief Deborah L. Eunpu. *Human Sciences*. 4/yr. USA \$95, elsewhere \$100 (institutional); USA \$40, elsewhere \$45 (personal).

AS the work of the Human Genome Project continues, technology is being rapidly developed for an increasing range of screening and diagnostic tests for genetic diseases and conditions in individuals and their families, present and future.

Many questions are raised. How should the tests be presented? How should the uncertainty of risk be conveyed? How can the distress associated with 'positive results' be minimized? How are genetics and inheritance best explained? What is an 'informed decision'? What should family members be told?

There is a great need for such questions to be studied empirically and for results to be communicated to those providing, and purchasing, genetics services. The appearance last year of *Journal of Genetic Counseling* is therefore to be welcomed. This publication aims to provide genetic counsellors and other genetics advisers with "careful examination of the methods used to convey genetic information". It does so by peer-reviewed research, essays, review articles and letters.

A variety of issues are covered, such as the role of genetic counsellors in different services, cultural barriers to genetic ser-

vices and how to overcome them, and practical recommendations for counselling. So far, issues have contained papers that tend to discuss questions rather than provide data for addressing them. The all-American editorial board perhaps accounts for the lack of contributions from outside the United States. But the journal is a promising beginning in an area with great potential. □

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In the footsteps of Pasteur

F. E. G. Cox

Immunology and Infectious Diseases. Editor R. K. Chandra. *Rapid Communications of Oxford*. 4/yr. £235, \$395 (institutional); £82, \$140 (personal).

Vaccine Research. Editor Michael G. Hanna Jr. *Liebert*. 4/yr. USA and Canada \$149, elsewhere \$189.

Infectious Agents and Disease. Editor-in-chief Bernard Roizman. *Raven*. 6/yr. USA and Canada \$138, elsewhere \$171 (institutional); USA and Canada \$98, elsewhere \$119 (personal).

THERE is obviously a lot of immunological research being done and lots of journals in which the results can be published, so any new venture must fill an important and distinct niche; otherwise it merely becomes a dumping ground for the ephemera of the subject.

The present massive field of immunology originally grew out of studies on immunity to infection but, apart from *Immunity and Infection* and *Vaccine*, there are few journals dedicated to this area. So there does seem to be a niche for one or more new publications. *Immunology and Infectious Diseases* starts off with a very wide brief to publish original articles, clinical trials, brief communications, critical reviews and hypotheses on topics such as immunoregulation, immunocompetent cells, cytokines, cancer and autoimmune disease; in other words, much of the same as one might find in any one of a hundred publications. In fact, the range of the 50 or so articles published each year is immense, but few, if any, seem to be in the front line of immunological research. What is new, however, is the aim to publish papers within 12 weeks of acceptance, an ambition achieved a few times in the first issue but seldom since, with the publication time drifting more recently to an average of 10 months, and in one case 18 months. In summary, this is just another general immunological journal.

Vaccine Research "provides a central forum of documentation of basic and applied research in vaccine development and application" and publishes reviews, articles, reports, brief communications, letters and leading articles. Vaccines are becoming increasingly important and a journal such as this could be a welcome addition to the literature, especially if



Point of departure — vaccination against cholera. From *La Science Illustrée* (c. 1890).

it covers veterinary topics. There are some good reviews but, in the main, the contents consist of five or six fairly ordinary papers mainly on experimental aspects of immunogenicity. Part 3 of volume 1 is devoted to the proceedings of a meeting on mucosal immunity and AIDS, and contains very little about vaccines. One doesn't get much for one's money because of the lavish use of space: 20 references occupy a whole page, for example. There is little evidence so far that *Vaccine Research* is going to be anything more than of peripheral interest to those working in the mainstream of this subject, although the occasional review might be well worth reading.

Two down and one to go. *Infectious Agents and Disease*, subtitled *Reviews Issues and Commentary*, publishes