

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! □

Walter Gratzer is in the MRC Muscle and Cell Motility Unit, King's College London, 26–29 Drury Lane, London WC2B 5RL, UK.

## 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. □

Susan Michie is in the Psychology and Genetics Research Group, United Medical and Dental Schools, Guy's Campus, London SE1 9RT, UK.

## 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

mainly invited reviews, mini-reviews, commentaries and issues of the day. The topics published so far have been very wide ranging, from the application of crystallography in the design of viral agents to the pathogenicity of *Entamoeba histolytica* and cytokines in helminth infections. Although the authors are all acknowledged experts, their contributions vary considerably in clarity and depth. The obvious comparison must be with *Immunology Today*, which is much better value for money, with 516 pages in 1992 (compared with 342) and more than twice as many articles. On the other hand, *Infectious Agents and Disease* is concerned with the real world of immunity to infection and is an attractive and authoritative publication that will appeal to many immunologists, microbiologists, parasitologists and clinicians. Of the three journals, *Infectious Agents and Disease* is the one most likely to succeed. □

F. E. G. Cox is in the Immunology and Infection Group, Division of Life Sciences, King's College London, Campden Hill Road, London W8 7AH, UK.

## Muscling in

Malcolm J. Jackson

**Basic and Applied Myology.** Editor-in-chief U. Carraro. Unipress, Padova, Italy. 4/yr. Italy IL150,000, elsewhere \$150 (institutional); Italy IL100,000, elsewhere \$100 (personal).

**Neuromuscular Disorders.** Editor-in-chief V. Dubowitz. Pergamon. 6/yr. £217, \$335 (institutional); £80, \$123 (personal).

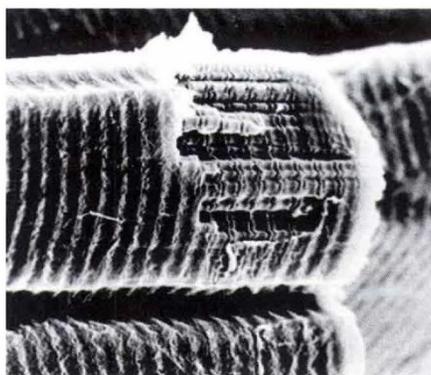
THE first leading article in *Basic and Applied Myology (BAM)* asks whether the new professional activity of 'myology' is emerging. From the clinical point of view, skeletal muscle has usually been placed in the field of neurology with papers mainly being published in neurological journals. The number of specialist journals for muscle researchers has been small. These two new journals are both seeking to attract papers from the group whose prime area of interest is muscle. Both are interdisciplinary: *Neuromuscular Disorders* covers both clinical and basic sciences of relevance to the neuromuscular diseases of childhood and adult life, whereas *BAM* aims to cover basic skeletal-muscle research and its clinical applications.

Muscle contraction has kept traditional physiologists busy for many years, but the past decade has seen many other disciplines looking at this tissue: molecular biologists have played an important role in the elucidation of the underlying defects

in Duchenne, Becker and myotonic muscular dystrophies, whereas cell biologists have become fascinated by the techniques and prospects of cell therapy for muscle disorders; even electronic engineers have been involved, developing implantable stimulators for electrical stimulation and transforming skeletal muscle fibre types for cardiac repair.

Both journals attempt to provide a forum for the publication of papers from many different disciplines. Overall there have been more papers on basic science in *BAM* and, among the original articles and reviews, a high proportion have dealt with the use of skeletal muscle in the assistance of failing cardiac tissue. *BAM* is well presented, with good-quality electron micrographs and histology plates.

*Neuromuscular Disorders* is also well presented. It is more clinically oriented, and publishes a wide range of papers from



Scanning electron micrograph of human striated muscle fibres ( $\times \sim 1,150$ ).

case reports to basic science. The reviews are excellent, particularly those related to recent advances in the cell and molecular biology of the muscular dystrophies. The journal seeks to provide a service to workers on genetic aspects by publishing a regularly revised table of gene locations and associated data for neuromuscular disorders. There are also lists of relevant, recently published papers, book reviews and conference reports.

Whether the muscle field can sustain two new journals remains to be seen. There is little direct competition: only *Muscle and Nerve* and perhaps *Journal of Muscle Research and Cell Motility* compete for a similar market. Initial submission rates look promising for *Neuromuscular Disorders*, which has had a rejection rate of about 50 per cent over its first two years. A more serious threat to the survival of both of these new publications will be the increasing financial constraints on institutional subscriptions. I hope the journals succeed. □

Malcolm J. Jackson is in the Muscle Research Centre, Department of Medicine, University of Liverpool, PO Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX, UK.

## Bridging gaps

Jean Merrill

**Advances in Neuroimmunology.** Editors G. B. Stefano and E. M. Smith. Pergamon. 4/yr. £189, \$290 (institutional); £76, \$117 (personal).

*ADVANCES IN NEUROIMMUNOLOGY* was launched and is still manned by several pioneers in this fast-evolving interdisciplinary field. Its goal is to publish short, up-to-date reviews on the two-way communication between the nervous and immune systems, in particular its relation to evolution, development, homeostasis and pathology. The journal's competitors are few, if any; no other journal exclusively promotes reviews in this field and only one or two journals are dedicated to publishing original scientific articles on the biological links between the two systems. The recent trend among some neuroscience journals to feature special issues that specifically address neuroimmune interactions may change this unique standing of *Advances*. But there is clearly a need for such a review journal. Although *Advances in Neuroimmunology* has some growing to do, it shows great promise.

The nature of the articles has varied over the years, with some issues stressing neuroimmune themes that might otherwise have been buried in speciality journals. An example of this is the interesting issue on the evolution of neuroimmune interactions. The review articles are important not only for bringing the reader up to date; many also have an exploratory and speculative component that serves a dual purpose of bridging the gap between studies in neuroscience and immunology and fostering creative new ideas that can be addressed in the laboratory. Recent issues on highly focused areas (neuro-AIDS, cytokines) have been guest-edited, breathing freshness into the contents.

Since its inception, the journal has changed shape, becoming smaller in size (trimmer in width and down to only five articles per issue). It is printed on glossy high-quality paper. Photographic illustrations, however, are few in number and mostly black and white. The trade-off is that there are no page charges to authors, and articles are published fairly rapidly. The subscription rate is a bit pricey for only four issues and prompts one to wish for more in terms of both quality and quantity. Although the luxury of subscribing to this journal may be unattainable for the individual, neuroscience and immunology departmental libraries should have copies on their shelves. □

Jean Merrill is in the Department of Neurology, School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024, USA.