

EDITORIAL

Reaching for new heights: *The Journal of Antibiotics* and NPG

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Sixty years since its first appearance, *The Journal of Antibiotics* (JA) is now taking proactive and innovative new steps to help place it firmly among the world's leading primary source journals. It is with great pleasure, and in expectation of unparalleled future growth and development, that I can confirm that JA will henceforth be published in collaboration with the renowned Nature Publishing Group (NPG). JA will thus be able to take its rightful place beside some of the world's premier scientific journals and publications. In a world witnessing unprecedented rates of scientific development and innovation, this new partnership with NPG will allow JA to fully extend both its reach and its influence on the global stage and in all aspects of antibiotics.

Looking back, the origins of the journal lay in the Japan Penicillin Association Corporation (JPAC), established in 1946, which began publishing the *Journal of Penicillin* a year later. In recognition of its growing importance and scope, the journal was renamed as *The Journal of Antibiotics* in 1948. Following suit, JPAC also changed its name to the Japan Antibiotic Research Association (JARA) in 1951, with JARA continuing to be responsible for the publication of the journal ever since.

In 1968, the Editorial Board of JA decided that the journal should expand its coverage and international stature, creating an English journal and recruiting new Board members from public and private institutions around the globe in the process. Close and sustained ties with industry were also established. The concept was to ensure that the results of the excellent research being conducted in Japan were conveyed to a far wider audience. In addition, English and science communication skills among Japanese researchers could be improved, especially with the active support and encouragement of international Editorial Board members. This has been a somewhat unique operating scenario, as is the fact that there has been a steady supply of funds donated by pharmaceutical company supporters to help meet the running costs of the journal.

JA has continuously been at the forefront of various areas of antibiotics research since its inception. Several original papers have been published on key drugs, such as pravastatin, tacrolimus (FK-506), sirolimus (rapamycin) and bleomycin. In addition, numerous papers have appeared with first reports of a plethora of important organic compounds of microbial origin that have entered into

practical or commercial use in animal and/or human health, agriculture or as biochemical reagents (for example, pepsatin and staurosporine). Until recently, much of the material published was from the results of Japanese research work. It is now envisaged that, following the link with NPG, arguably the world's leader in science publishing, JA will adopt a truly global mantle, with an ever-increasing number of international contributors and readers. We specifically intend to place JA firmly in the vanguard of research publications focusing on antibiotics.

No journal can establish itself and thrive without the unswerving commitment and drive of talented and dedicated individuals. JA was fortunate in having such a man in the long-serving JARA Managing Director, the late Dr Yukimasa Yagaisawa, who expertly assumed and carried out the post and duties of Managing Editor of the journal. He, along with Dr Morimasa Yagisawa, was responsible for setting up and maintaining the journal's highly effective publication and administrative systems. The current Editorial Board members, journal staff and I will strive to build on their solid foundation and propel the journal to new levels of excellence and impact.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my immense gratitude to all those associated with JA, including researchers, readers, authors and all those involved in the various aspects of production and operation, for their support and encouragement through the years. In particular, I would like to reaffirm my sincere thanks to the many Friends of the Journal who have provided financial resources and support in recognition of the import and significance of the publication, and I hope that we can count on continued and increasing support in the foreseeable future. I humbly invite all to join me and my colleagues—at JA and at NPG—in an exciting journey to elevate the journal to greater heights in a new era of innovative research and development that will hopefully provide us all with new knowledge, better understanding, and new and novel antibiotics that are so desperately needed.

Satoshi Ōmura
Editor-in-Chief

Kitasato Institute for Life Sciences, Kitasato University, Japan
E-mail: omuras@insti.kitasato-u.ac.jp