

nature medicine

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About *Nature Medicine*

What is *Nature Medicine*? We have been asked this question on a number of occasions recently, and as biomedical research is constantly redefining itself and its methods, we felt it timely to clarify our mission and our role.

Nature Medicine is a biomedical research journal that aims to publish cutting-edge results that elucidate the molecular mechanisms of disease, with the ultimate objective of improving health. Our goal is to present cross-disciplinary research that bridges the gap between basic biological investigations and translational studies. Articles published in *Nature Medicine* range from basic findings that have clear implications for disease pathogenesis and therapy to the initial phases of clinical investigation, and are selected for their potential interest, impact and implications for the biomedical community at large.

Research articles are not, however, our only venue for addressing these aims. Recognizing that the best research stems from an informed perspective, *Nature Medicine* also provides up-to-date news, commentaries, reviews, News & Views, web focuses and supplemental features on topics of interest to the broader scientific community. We provide our readers with an essential research tool for keeping up with the exciting developments in biomedicine and maintaining cross-disciplinary awareness.

Who are our readers? A combination of PhDs and MDs (roughly equal in numbers PhDs, MDs and MD/PhDs), consisting of basic, applied, translational and clinical scientists who are interested in significant advances in diverse areas of biomedical research. In deference to our readers, articles cover various fields including cancer biology, cardiovascular research, infectious disease, immunology, vaccine development, neuroscience and metabolic

disease, and aim to keep readers informed of a wide range of biomedical research findings and to put scientific developments into a medical context.

What is our mission? Our goal is to publish outstanding research that constitutes a significant advance in its field, increases understanding of disease pathogenesis and establishes the foundation for translation to the clinic. We are interested in explorations of disease states that go beyond description and correlation and provide new insight into the physiological relevance of fundamental molecular mechanisms that drive a cancer cell to metastasize, a T cell to activate or a cardiomyocyte to undergo apoptosis. We are interested in clinical applicability and therapeutic potential of new drugs, vaccines or treatment regimens, but we want to see the mechanism by which the drug acts to better predict future effects in patients, or to explain the clinical results. Do we want it all? In sum, yes. We readily acknowledge that this is not always possible, and moreover we recognize the importance of publishing groundbreaking results at times before their verification *in vivo*. But we feel strongly that, overall, the integration of *in vitro* with *in vivo* data provides the best synthesis of a concerted approach to tackling and understanding the basis of disease.

Frequently we are faced with researchers' desire to publish separately each piece of a puzzle, rather than wait to complete the picture. And although we recognize the pressure on researchers to publish, we remain convinced that our continued insistence on conceptual advance and significant impact is of mutual benefit to both the authors and the larger scientific community. In this respect, as in many others, we owe a debt of gratitude to our reviewers who facilitate the compro-

mise between the desirable and the feasible and help us achieve the high standard to which our impact factor attests.

The rapidly developing crossover of basic research with clinical efforts is symptomatic of the evolving landscape of medical research. With the aim of keeping up with the changing practices in today's research community, changes are likewise occurring at *Nature Medicine*. In parallel with the efforts of the Nature Publishing Group, as of 1 October 2001 we require that authors declare any competing financial interests pertaining to their publication in this journal, with the intent of ensuring transparency and accountability. We also no longer require authors to waive their copyright of a published article, and instead have instituted a licensing agreement that grants to the Nature Publishing Group the exclusive right to publish and distribute an article while allowing the authors to retain the copyright ownership. In recognition of the accelerating pace of science, in upcoming months we will introduce online submission and tracking of manuscripts, as well as advance online publication for faster processing of manuscripts.

As a cross-disciplinary journal occupying a unique niche at the heart of the international biomedical research community, *Nature Medicine* must not only reflect current scientific trends and advances, but also anticipate and respond to the shifting needs of the community. With the growing interest in translational medicine, for instance, we expect to see greater recognition of its integral role in the application of basic research. Our aim is to serve the biomedical research community and the expanding intersection of basic and clinical approaches. To achieve this goal, we encourage and welcome your input and insight, and hope that you will join in this dialogue at medicine@natureny.com.