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REVIEWS

DRUG DISCOVERY

PI3Kγ INHIBITION
Towards an 'aspirin of the 21st century'

Biomarker qualification
A cost-effectiveness approach to balancing risk and benefit

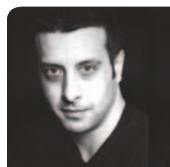
► COVER: 'Risk–benefit balance' by Susanne Harris, inspired by the perspective on p897.



PETER KIRKPATRICK



JOANNA OWENS



SIMON FRANTZ



ALEXANDRA FLEMMING



KATHERINE WHALLEY



CHARLOTTE HARRISON

Efforts to develop new therapies for diseases that represent a massive burden in the developing world, such as malaria, have gained new impetus in recent years, stimulated in part by philanthropic funding. Two reviews this month describe approaches to addressing some of the major challenges such efforts are presently facing. Deen and Clemens consider issues in the design and implementation of vaccine trials in less-developed countries, whereas Nwaka and Hudson discuss strategies to alleviate a key bottleneck in the pipeline for novel drugs for tropical diseases — lead discovery. Another significant bottleneck in drug development in general is biomarker qualification, and in an article in our series on biomarkers Williams and colleagues propose a cost-effectiveness approach to tackle this problem. Also part of an ongoing series — in this case, on model organisms — is a review by Van Dam and De Deyn that summarizes and evaluates rodent models of dementia, which will have a key role in assessing novel therapeutics for disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. Like Alzheimer's, obesity is the focus of major efforts to develop new drugs at present, and in their review Cooke and Bloom overview the pipeline for obesity therapies, with an emphasis on gut peptides. And opening our review section, Rommel and colleagues highlight efforts to capitalize on the promising potential of the signalling molecule phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase- γ as a target for the treatment of inflammatory disease. Finally, this month we are pleased to present the first article in a new careers section profiling people involved with the biopharma industry — Career snapshots — which will aim to provide insights on a wide range of roles, as well as career development tips.

EDITORIAL OFFICES

LONDON NatureReviews@nature.com
The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street,
London N1 9XW, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7843 3620;

Fax: +44 (0)20 7843 3629

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LONDON nature@nature.com
The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street,
London N1 9XW, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7833 4000;

Fax: +44 (0)20 7843 4596/7

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Jeremy Macdonald

NEW YORK nature@natureny.com

Nature Publishing Group, 75 Varick Street,
9th floor, New York, NY 10013-1917, USA
Tel: +1 212 726 9200;
Fax: +1 212 696 9006

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Chiyoda Building 5F, 2-37-1 Ichigayatamachi,
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-0843, Japan
Tel: +81 3 3267 8751;
Fax: +81 3 3267 8746

ASIA-PACIFIC PUBLISHER:

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SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER:

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INDIA 5A/12 Ansari Road, Daryaganj,

New Delhi 110 002, India

Tel/Fax: +91 11 2324 4186

SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER, INDIA:

Harpal Singh Gill

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