



nature publishing group



► **COVER:** 'Lipid rainbow' by Thilo Weimar (<http://www.thiloweimar.eu>) inspired by the Review on p162



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Lipids, which were once thought to be just structural insulators that separate intracellular and extracellular space, are now recognized to be versatile molecules that are involved in many cellular processes. As such, lipids have attracted the attention of many researchers and communities, including burgeoning lipidomics consortia.

As the lipidomics community grows, it becomes increasingly important to develop networks to unite researchers and institutions. One such network is The European Lipidomics Initiative; Shaping the life sciences (ELife), which was founded in 2004 and now includes > 140 registered institutions. One of the key features that has emerged from ELife is the Lipidomics Expertise Platform (LEP), a Wikipedia-based data and knowledge resource that addresses the lipidome. LEP is currently accessed ~ 100 times per week by scientists looking for lipid-species pathways or genetic and methodological information about the lipidome. Globally, ELife collaborates with other initiatives — such as the US-based LIPID Metabolites And Pathways Strategy (LIPID MAPS) and the Japan-based LipidBank — to standardize lipidome-related nomenclature and to harmonize the approaches that are used to study the metabolic pathways of lipids (Web watch, page 92).

As an additional lipid resource, we present a Focus on Lipids (www.nature.com/nrm/focus/lipids). The Focus articles consider different aspects of lipid biology, from the localization and behaviour of membrane lipids by Gerrit van Meer and colleagues (page 112) to the principles of sphingolipid signalling by Yusuf A. Hannun and Lina M. Obeid (page 139). The review by Matthias P. Wymann and Roger Schneiter (page 162) is accompanied by a free Poster entitled 'Targeting lipid signalling in disease' (www.nature.com/nrm/posters/lipidsignalling-disease), which was produced with generous support from Merck Serono International S.A.

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