

NRMicro: 100 not out!

Reaching the landmark of our one hundredth issue gives us the perfect opportunity to look back at the issues highlighted in our very first Editorial and assess how relevant they are today.

When *Nature Reviews Microbiology* was launched back in 2003, the microbiology research landscape was remarkably different from that of today: the human microbiome was but a twinkle in Jeff Gordon's eye, the microbial signatures in the Sargasso Sea lay undisturbed and adaptive immunity was assumed to be restricted to 'higher' organisms.

However, as highlighted in the Editorial in our first issue, after suffering from a lack of recognition as other areas of the life sciences took precedence, by 2003 microbiology had taken its place at the top of the life science agenda, although not necessarily for the most desirable of reasons. Only 2 years had passed since the anthrax attacks in the United States, and the US government was beginning to invest heavily in biodefence-related research and bioterror preparedness. The total investment in biodefence over the period 2001–2011 is estimated at US\$60 billion. In our Editorial, we remarked that the consequences of such investment could “change the face of microbiology”, but it is safe to say that this prediction did not come true. Although organizations such as the CDC did benefit from much-needed investment to improve public health infrastructure in the United States, most microbiologists and policy makers now acknowledge that the money could, and should, have been invested much more effectively.

As well as addressing the “unprecedented fiscal attention” that certain areas of microbiology research were beginning to receive, our first Editorial also defined the scope of the journal. Our admittedly lofty aim was to become an information resource for all who share an interest in microbial life. The editorial team therefore took the deliberate decision that the scope of the journal should encompass the entire breadth of microbiology, from bacteria, archaea and viruses to fungi and protozoan parasites, and all research areas, including (but not limited to) pathogenesis and the host response, environmental microbiology, cellular microbiology, clinical microbiology, and applied and industrial microbiology. A look through our first 100 issues reveals that we have adhered to this broad remit, and with every issue we have tried to present a broad overview of the progress that has been made in some of the most exciting areas of microbiology research. Although selecting highlights from the 645 Reviews and Perspectives we have published to date is an impossible

task, they have come from the slopes of the McMurdo Dry Valleys and the depths of Ace Lake in Antarctica, proposed a new archaeal phylum, debated why viruses should — or should not — be excluded from the tree of life, and discussed the chemical language of fungal communication, the remodelling of red blood cells by the malaria parasite and whether antibiotic resistance can be reversed.

The Editorial also acknowledged the disconnect that exists between the main organism types that are studied by microbiologists, and pledged to try to bridge the gap between the separate disciplines. In this aim, we would have to concede that we have been somewhat less successful. Although in many universities around the world there is now a trend towards creating multidisciplinary centres and research institutes, the barriers between bacteriologist, virologist, archaeologist, mycologist and parasitologist still seem very firmly entrenched. We have been able to publish some highly successful articles that have covered more than one organism type, but these manuscripts have been much less frequent than we would have liked, and this is one area we will definitely be looking to improve on in the future.

In launching another review journal into what was an already very crowded marketplace, Nature Publishing Group took a calculated risk that their investment in the high-end production values of the *Nature Reviews* series, and the close working relationship between authors and the in-house editorial staff, would be welcomed by microbiologists. If we take the Thomson/ISI impact factor as a measure (albeit an imperfect one) of how well the journal has been received by the microbiology community, then it would appear that this risk has paid off. Our Impact Factor has increased steadily since 2005 and now stands at 20.686, making us the number 1 journal in the Microbiology category by a considerable margin.

Obviously, any journal is only as good as the articles that it publishes. Thus, above all in this, our one hundredth issue, we would like to sincerely thank our regular contributors from the Sanger Institute at the Wellcome Trust Genome Campus in Cambridge, UK, who write Genome Watch every month, news junkie David Ojcius, who eagerly scans the news wires for stories we can feature in Disease Watch, and of course all our authors and referees, on whom the whole venture depends. Here's to the next 100 issues!

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