



Reasons to be cheerful

“ We are driven to improve our editorial processes and make them more transparent and accessible; to increase diversity and inclusivity ... and to create new opportunities for early career researchers ”

There is a popular joke about a gentleman who was travelling in Ireland and stopped at the side of the road to ask a farmer for directions to wherever it was that he wanted to be. The farmer looked up, scratched his chin and said: “Well ... if I were you sir, I wouldn't start from here.”

This is a landmark year by anyone's measure. COVID-19 has had a catastrophic impact on populations, societies and economies and has interrupted almost every aspect of human activity, and the recovery period will be long. Lives have changed, and in many ways 2020 is not a good place to be. But there are many reasons to be optimistic as we begin the next part of our journey, from here. In the past six months, we have been forced to let go of old habits and we have adapted, refocused, invented and improved, and learnt a lot about the opportunities and advantages that the ‘new normal’ might bring. We should all hope and strive for change — for accelerated outcomes and earlier impacts; for better collaboration and conferencing; for greater sustainability, diversity and inclusivity. This could indeed be the start of something good.

It would be a great loss, however, if support for fundamental research was diminished because of the way science has been portrayed recently in the media. The research community has risen to the challenge of COVID-19 with extraordinary drive and determination that is truly impressive. But perhaps, under that media spotlight, the perception of science and its role is changing. It is without doubt a moral duty for science to tackle threats to the planet and to human health with great urgency. But, it also seems important to discourage the idea that all research must be outcome-driven, and to reinforce the message that, often, the benefits to society of fundamental research can be profound albeit not revealed or understood until much later. *Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology* (NRMCB) will continue to champion fundamental research alongside translational and medical research.

2020 also marks NRMCB's 20th anniversary and, although it hardly seems like a time for celebration, we would like to acknowledge and thank all of our contributors and colleagues — past and present — who have made the journal what it is today. For 20 years we have worked hand-in-hand with thousands of authors and reviewers to deliver high-quality reviews, commentaries and research highlights that have been valued and trusted by the scientific community. We have witnessed remarkable advances since the publication of our first issue: the development of iPS cells; CRISPR-Cas; revolutionary single-cell, imaging and sequencing techniques; discovery of autophagy and cell death mechanisms and of the true dimensions of non-coding RNA; new understanding of subcellular organization and function; and how genomes, cells and organisms respond and adapt to changing environments. Our **20th anniversary collection**, published this month, showcases some of these advances. Who knows what the next 20 years will bring? Rest assured that our finger will remain on the pulse, and we will continue to provide the most timely, most relevant, most comprehensive expert synthesis of scientific progress.

Springer Nature is continuously evolving and improving to better serve the needs of its authors, reviewers and readers, and NRMCB is fully aligned with this mission. We are driven to improve our editorial processes and make them more transparent and accessible; to increase diversity and inclusivity across all of our contributor groups and to create new opportunities for early career researchers; and to build a culture of innovation and service that will ensure and strengthen NRMCB's position as leader in its field. As always, your feedback relating to journal content, or to your experience as a contributor, is essential and will be gratefully received.

We look forward very much to the next part of our journey, and to another 20 years of high quality writing and collaboration.

