

Changes we can believe in

Vivian Siegel, Editor-in-Chief

The new Republican majority in the US House of Representatives has just arrived in Washington, DC, and the phrase “change we can believe in” feels almost like a thorn. And yet, with this editorial announcing various changes to publishing policy and scope at DMM, I focus on changes in which I do believe.

Open access

Those who know me and my history of advocacy for open access publishing will know I consider this an important step forward. The decision to make DMM open access has the full support of The Company of Biologists and the Founding Editors and Editorial Board of DMM. I am proud of the Company for their commitment to the journal and for their willingness to explore the open access model using DMM. With your support for the journal, I am confident that The Company of Biologists will find open access to be a powerful way of maximizing the impact of the work that we publish as well as a viable and successful business model.

As of this issue, DMM is fully open access: all articles will be freely accessible immediately upon publication, distributed under a Creative Commons license and deposited in an open access database. As has always been the case at this journal, authors retain copyright, but now they license DMM to publish their content using a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike License, which enables others to use the work without seeking prior permission, as long as they attribute the source of the work, use it for non-commercial purposes and license the resulting work under the same terms. This ensures that anything that relies on your work will remain non-commercial in nature and fully available to others. Furthermore, our content will be available for all interested readers not just on the DMM website but also in PubMed Central (PMC) and/or PubMed Central UK. We have already been depositing research content into PMC when the funding body requires it, but now we will deposit all content.

Expanded scope

As I wrote in my first DMM editorial, I agreed to launch the journal because “I believe that the divide between interesting science and clinically relevant science is gone: there are now incredible

opportunities for basic researchers interested in working on projects directly relevant to human health” (Siegel, 2008), and because basic researchers interested in tackling problems related to human health needed a forum to communicate with each other and with those with greater clinical knowledge. We began with a focus on researchers who use model organisms, because we felt they most needed a journal that welcomed and encouraged them. However, community feedback indicated that this scope excluded important contributors to the discussion and important insights into disease mechanisms. After several discussions involving the Founding Editors, Editorial Board and advisory group for DMM, we have decided to expand the scope of the journal beyond studies using model organisms to include other experimental approaches that yield insight into disease mechanisms. Expanding the scope now means DMM will remain focused on the challenge of identifying important basic research with translational impact but will become open to all the various approaches used to gain those crucial insights.

This expansion in scope will become more evident in our published content over time, as manuscripts wend their way through the publishing system. If you have a paper that offers insight into disease mechanism, diagnosis or therapy, we hope you will consider finding a home for your research in DMM.

Faster publishing

We promised when we launched the journal to provide rapid and high-quality publishing. However, after carefully assessing our own publishing practices, we have had to admit that we have not always been able to meet the former part of this aim for several reasons. Delayed publication times have resulted in part

from processing the Translational Impact box that we publish with every research article. Since we rewrite this section of the paper from a draft provided by the authors, we now ask for the Translational Impact box at submission, rather than after acceptance. This allows us to publish a fully edited manuscript more quickly and also helps the authors focus from the outset on the disease relevance of the submitted research. A second source of delay has been our focus on the journal issue and its associated publication timetable, which is not in line with the way that most researchers currently access content, which is increasingly through early online versions of articles. We have therefore adjusted our workflow so that we can publish content online every week, as soon as possible after the authors approve their article proofs. This has cut down the time from acceptance to publication, although we still maintain the high degree of attention paid to production quality. This year we introduce one final change to speed up publication: immediately after acceptance manuscripts may be published online as unedited preprints, which are replaced within a few weeks by the fully edited and proofed version of the article.

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More of what works

With the guidance of our new Scientific Editor Sarah Allan and our Managing Editor Kirsty McCormack, we have assessed our range of invited material to determine what the DMM readership finds most useful. Our At a Glance poster article on metabolic syndrome (Huang, 2009) proved popular, so we plan to publish more of these illustrative reviews in 2011. In addition, the Journal Club articles we introduced in 2010 have garnered considerable interest among the research trainees in our community, and we intend to continue them this year. Our Model for Life articles have also proven appealing, with an interesting range of both interviewees and interviewers. We feature our Model for Life interviewees in our podcasts, which often include excerpts not found in the article itself. Our podcasts also feature interviews with some of the authors of our research articles. In addition, we have changed our design in a variety of ways. The most striking change will be the forthcoming redesign of the homepage, which is both more aesthetic and more functional, getting you quickly to the content you need.

In addition to publishing the journal, we regularly look for other ways we can stimulate discussions among the community of researchers interested in human disease. We continue to offer Travelling Fellowships to stimulate collaborative work (applications

can be downloaded from <http://dmm.biologists.org/site/misc/fellowships.xhtml>), and Research Presentation Grants to our authors to present work they publish with us at national or international research conferences. Finally, we have organized a conference of our own: the first Company of Biologists Workshop this year will be 'Cancer as a Microevolutionary Process', organized by DMM Founding Editor Gerard Evan together with Karen Vousden and Doug Green, and aided by DMM Consulting Editor Kathy Weston. Although applications for this workshop are now closed, we will be publishing a report from the workshop in a future issue of the journal. More information about upcoming workshops organized by the Company can be found at <http://workshops.biologists.com/>.

Increasing our access, broadening our scope, expediting our time to publication, and finding new ways for our community to meet and collaborate: all these changes reflect a desire to better serve our authors and our readers, and to enhance research progress – and all are changes we can believe in.

REFERENCES

- Huang, P. L. (2009). A comprehensive definition for metabolic syndrome. *Dis. Model. Mech.* **2**, 231-237.
 Siegel, V. (2008). Provoking progress. *Dis. Model. Mech.* **1**, 3-5.

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- **MMP9 is protective against lethal inflammatory mass lesions in the mouse colon.** Andreas Hald, Birgitte Rønø, Maria C. Melander, Ming Ding, Susanne Holck and Leif R. Lund
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