

# Optimizing the *JEM*

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Executive Editor, *The Journal of Experimental Medicine*

**Published since 1896, the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* was long ago established as a reliable source of high-impact findings relevant to human disease. Five months ago, I joined the *JEM* as Executive Editor, with the aim of making this strong journal even stronger. This editorial describes recent and ongoing changes to the *JEM*'s process, scope, and content.**

## Process

In the past, each manuscript submitted to the *JEM* was assigned—by different scientific editors in the *JEM* office during different weeks—to one of our 12 academic editors. This primary academic editor would send the manuscript and their opinion of it to a secondary academic editor, who would then send it, along with their opinion, either back to the *JEM* office or to a tertiary academic editor for a third opinion.

As of January 2010, all newly submitted manuscripts are first read and discussed in the *JEM* office by an expanding team of full-time scientific editors. Each manuscript is then sent, together with the scientific editor opinion and any related manuscripts, to one or two academic editors. This new process should expedite the initial review process and ensure that related manuscripts—which often focus on highly competitive topics—are handled consistently.

Also relevant to manuscripts on competitive topics: as of March 2010, the *JEM* has the ability to expedite—at the discretion of the editors—online publication of accepted papers.

Regardless of whether it is true, the notion persists that *JEM* academic editors have an easier time than outside scientists publishing their manuscripts in the *JEM*. To help dispel this notion and make the process of assessing manuscripts from academic editors more

transparent, as of April 2010, all manuscripts submitted to *JEM* by academic editors are handled by one of three designated outside monitoring editors. In selecting monitoring editors, we sought outstanding scientists who have demonstrated a consistent ability to provide stellar, decisive reviews of papers in diverse fields. We are thrilled that our first choices—Jason Cyster, Marco Colonna, and Steve Hedrick—agreed to fill these positions.

## Scope

Although stem cell biology, cancer biology, and neurobiology have always been within the scope of the *JEM*, few scientists in these rapidly growing fields regularly read the *JEM* or submit their work to the journal. This is perhaps not a surprise, as each of the *JEM* academic editors is known first and foremost as an elite immunologist, microbiologist, or vascular biologist. For this reason, in April 2010, the *JEM* welcomed Andreas Trumpp of the Heidelberg Institute for Stem Cell Technology and Experimental Medicine (HI-STEM) and the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DKFZ) Division of Stem Cells and Cancer, a scientist with expertise spanning cancer and stem cell biology, as a new academic editor. We also invited Paul Patterson, Jim Malter, Sean Morrison, Lou Staudt, and Benjamin Neel to join our roster of Advisory Editors.

In addition, to communicate *JEM*'s interest in these fields, *JEM* scientific editors are traveling to relevant

conferences and institutes. As a start, we attended the Keystone Stem Cell Differentiation and Dedifferentiation meeting in February, met with stem cell and cancer biologists in Boston in March, will visit laboratories in New York in April and London in June, and will attend the Cold Spring Harbor meeting on Mechanisms and Models of Cancer in August.

You'll also note that we've invited prominent scientists in these fields to write commentaries on relevant *JEM* papers. Ross Levine and Omar Abdel-Wahab wrote "Metabolism and the leukemic stem cell" in our April 12 issue, and you will see additional pieces in May and June.

## Content

Starting this summer, *JEM* will also publish Reviews and Perspectives. These pieces will be commissioned on broad topics that would benefit from an expert effort to tie together a series of recent but separate observations with a unique "big picture" viewpoint.

Lastly, we have refocused our notion of what a *JEM* Brief Definitive Report should be. Rather than simply a shorter version of an Article, the BDR format will be reserved for studies presenting very surprising findings with the potential to spark new avenues of research, studies that provide definitive answers to persistent open questions or settle controversies of broad interest, or studies that present concise conceptual advances in rapidly moving fields.

Please feel free to send feedback on these changes and/or suggestions for additional improvements to myself (cborowski@rockefeller.edu) or to our Senior Editor Heather Van Epps (hvanepps@rockefeller.edu). I hope to see you at a conference or laboratory visit in the near future.

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