

Letters to the editor

Edward N. Pugh Jr., Editor

The Journal of General Physiology

In a paper published in the December 2010 issue of the *JGP*, J.D. Lueck, A.E. Rossi, C.A. Thornton, K.P. Campbell, and R.T. Dirksen concluded on the basis of three different approaches that the T-tubule system of mouse flexor digitorum brevis muscle fibers contains a negligible quantity of ClC-1 chloride channels relative to that in the sarcolemma (Lueck et al., 2010; *JGP* 136:597–613). In this issue, we publish a letter to the editor (LTE) from G.D. Lamb, R.M. Murphy, and D.G. Stephenson that questions this conclusion, along with the response of Lueck et al. to the letter.

When there is divergence of opinion about the validity of a conclusion in one of its articles, a journal needs to provide a mechanism and a forum for this divergence to be expressed and evaluated by peers; the LTE is one such mechanism. Upon receipt, an LTE is sent to the authors of the manuscript in question, who prepare a response (subject to the same format and length requirements as the LTE). The LTE and response are then sent to reviewers, who are asked to evaluate them using the same criteria as are applied to a manuscript. The editors then assess the LTE, response, and reviews, and determine whether publication is warranted.

Good scientists do reach and hold divergent views on important issues. The ultimate arbiter of the truth of a

conclusion, however, is the scientific process, not specific authors, reviewers, or editors. In the matter at issue, it may take further peer-reviewed experimentation and analysis by the principals involved, and by others, to reach that definitive conclusion. While the LTE published in this issue meets a specific need in the scientific process, there is clearly a more general need for refereed public evaluation of scientific evidence than can be met by LTEs. Other mechanisms for evaluation of published science are emerging, and here we announce one such that will be implemented soon by the *JGP*.

Announcing the *JGP* Journal Club Article

In its April issue, the *JGP* will present the first of a new category of publication, the **JGP Journal Club Article**. In departments and research groups around the world, new (and old) publications are read, discussed, analyzed, and evaluated for the validity and importance of their conclusions in journal clubs. A great deal of intellectual effort on the part of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows—as well as faculty members—is expended in such clubs, and we hope that by instituting the Journal Club Article the *JGP* will tap into this rich vein of energy, providing a forum specifically for younger physiologists. Stay tuned!

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