

# Introductory Editorial

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I am pleased to announce the launch of *Immunotherapy Insights*—a new peer reviewed open access journal published by Libertas Academica. Cellular Immunotherapy, vaccines and cytokine-based immunotherapy are fast-developing areas of research and clinical practice, making possible new treatments for hematological malignancies, cancer, and autoimmune diseases. *Immunotherapy Insights* will be of interest to scientists and clinicians in the field of immune-based treatments cancer research and autoimmune diseases.

The idea of using the immune system to fight malignant disease and to manipulate immunity favorably to prevent infections and treat autoimmune disease has a long history, hitherto characterised by more promise than substance. For a long time the most powerful and reproducible immunotherapy was the graft-versus-leukemia effect conferred by the alloresponse of donor immune cells against a recipients leukemia after stem cell transplantation. However alongside developments in stem cell transplantation, the field of tumor immunology progressed steadily, with the identification of many tumor antigens and the fuller understanding of adaptive and innate immune responses to cancer (linked inevitably with identifying ways in which cancers evade immune control). Furthermore, new insights in human immunology has paved the way for new strategies to treat autoimmune diseases. In recent years the ability to generate cells and vaccines for immunotherapy has opened the field as never before to clinical trials, especially in malignant disease. Immunotherapy approaches continue to diversify and now include vaccines, cytokines, cell therapy using both classical immune cells (T cells, B cells, NK cells, dendritic cells) as well as novel cell types such as mesenchymal stromal cells. The journal will cover contributions on allogeneic and autologous stem cell transplantation, graft-versus-host and graft-versus-leukemia effects, and gene therapy including gene modification of cells for adoptive transfer.

The launch of *Immunotherapy Insights* comes at a time when the field is broadening sufficiently to merit multiple sites for scientists and clinicians to publish their findings. It is therefore hoped that the rapid online publication offered by *Immunotherapy Insights* will complement rather than rival existing avenues of publication and contribute to advance in this exciting field. While immunotherapy will clearly have a major clinical focus, we plan to cover all aspects of the field from basic immunological science through animal studies, translational research, regulatory aspects, and of course, clinical trial results. We invite you to submit original work, reviews and commentaries in these areas of immunotherapy.

As editor of *Immunotherapy Insights* I offer my background of a career in stem cell transplantation, use of immunosuppressive agents, immune cell therapy and vaccine development which includes basic laboratory and translational research in transplant immunology as well as clinical expertise in transplantation and leukemia vaccines. I am proud that our Editorial Board is represented by a broad representation of cutting edge world experts in the field.

The journal will be competing head-on with a number of existing subscription-based journals. However, there is clearly a niche for the new journal. The reason for this is because all journal articles will be accessible without any access boundaries to all internet users throughout the world. Another major benefit of open access online journals is that anyone can contribute, and not only those in major institutions. These freedoms are coupled with rigorous, fair and prompt standards of peer review.

*Immunotherapy Insights* is published exclusively online. Articles will follow a consistent format so that the visual impact will be high and equal to that of the best hard-copy publications. In contrast to

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paper-based journals, however, the electronic format allows the full use of digital technologies and permits the inclusion of large data sets, from field and laboratory studies, links to other web pages, animations, slide shows, video clips and unlimited colour, all at no additional charge. Open access means that all articles are freely available to all, worldwide, and at no cost to the reader. Authors retain copyright of their work and can grant anyone the right to reproduce and disseminate it, provided that it is correctly cited and no errors are introduced, under the Creative Commons “CC-BY” licence.

In hard-copy journals, the costs of publication are met by subscriptions, paid by the reader. In *Immunotherapy Insights* as in other open access journals, these costs are borne by the author in the form of a publication processing fee. Many grant-awarding bodies recognise the value of open access publishing by allowing their funds to be used for PPFs. Fee waivers and discounts are available on a case-by-case basis, and we shall make every effort to ensure that lack of funds does not impede

the overall objective of publishing the best science, irrespective of authorship or country of origin.

I do not foresee that open access, online journals will totally replace the traditional print format in the immediate future, although this may be an increasing trend with time. I am certain, however, that the benefits of online publication, and the extra opportunities that digital technologies give to authors, will be increasingly recognised. Open access is of huge benefit to the researchers working in institutions around the world where institutional libraries are unable to afford subscription fees for a full range of journals.

I expect that *Immunotherapy Insights* will attract manuscripts of the highest quality which are of the greatest possible benefit to readers. Peer review is undertaken by at least two leading experts in the area of the manuscript.

For further information on what we hope will be an exciting and highly useful new journal, please click on the “about this journal” link on the journal’s web page.