EDITORIAL

Contemporary Reviews in Toxicology

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Toxicological Sciences exists for the purpose of publishing primary research findings in all areas of toxicology. In support of that mission, it is often necessary to publish other types of articles, such as letters to the editor and editorials. It is also necessary to place the research findings into the appropriate context whether it is medicine, environmental protection, or public health. Our Forum articles provide an excellent method for our community to make those important connections. Another key content item is our review articles.

Reviews have the potential to summarize years of research, address controversy in the field, and provide a vision for future research. With the explosive growth of online journals, there are numerous outlets for review papers. Unfortunately, not all of the reviews in print merit the pages on which they are printed. There are a few reasons for this. One, publishers and editors have learned that printing a high volume of reviews is a good way to boost a journal’s impact factor as reviews tend to receive more citations than primary papers. Two, because these papers receive more citations, authors see them as an excellent way of increasing their own citations and h-indices. Given the competitive nature of journal publishing and science, whether in academia, government, or industry, both motivations can be justified and are somewhat understandable. Unfortunately, neither of these reasons adequately serve the scientific community nor advance the field of toxicology. Reviews should be written because the field needs them. We therefore propose a call for highly relevant and meritorious reviews that meet this high standard of quality.

This is our vision for the Contemporary Reviews in Toxicology. Our field needs an outlet for outstanding reviews of recent and emerging trends within the discipline. As the Official Journal of the Society of Toxicology, the Contemporary Reviews in Toxicology have the imprimatur of the Society and its 8000 members. Our field needs this outlet and Toxicological Sciences plans to deliver it. To increase reach and influence, we will make these reviews freely available to readers.

Toxicological Sciences will publish Contemporary Reviews in Toxicology because the field needs them.

The series published by Annual Reviews are very well respected and provide authoritative and near exhaustive reviews of the literature. The Trends journals published by Cell Press provide a variety of review and opinion pieces in several fields. As many readers know, toxicology plays second fiddle to pharmacology in these and other venues. Not here. The Contemporary Reviews in Toxicology are here to serve the toxicology community. We do not anticipate publishing more than one review per issue, but we want these reviews to be readable, memorable, and influential.

What we are looking for:

(1) A topic of interest to the field. For those of you who are members of SOT and are familiar with the various Specialty Sections, it may be helpful to think about how the topic would be of interest to multiple such groups. There should be several recent publications in the topic area or one or two transformative reports that alter current thought.

(2) Authors who are recognized in their respective fields for publishing high-quality work. Gray hair is not required. We believe that many of our reviews will come from young investigators shortly out of fellowship training as these individuals are often working at the cutting edge of a research area. To put it another way, if you have not published influential work within a particular discipline, it is nearly impossible to have the credibility to write an influential review.

(3) High-quality writing. We are looking for expertsly crafted manuscripts that utilize an engaging writing style to describe the serious science. It should go beyond summarizing findings and provide conceptual insight. We anticipate significant revisions will be necessary for all submitted reviews.

For students in toxicology and related disciplines, it is important to read outside of their specific area of research. Tools and concepts borrowed from other subdisciplines are often required to advance a field. The Contemporary Reviews in Toxicology should provide the type of content for anybody in the field to keep abreast of what is going on outside of their own laboratory. Signs that you or your colleagues are ready to propose a CRT:

(1) You doubt that you have time to write a review. Scientists engaged in cutting edge work are necessarily stretched for time, but are exactly the type of authors needed.

(2) Your research topic is one that can garner support from funding agencies and attention and praise from other scientists (outside your inner circle).
There has been so much recent movement in your field that it desperately needs a concise update. You sense that such a review is necessary. Even in the face of the evidence from no. 1, you realize that you must find a way to write on this topic. It is clear that the field needs direction (or redirection).

Please visit http://toxsci.oxfordjournals.org to read the instructions for authors. We invite you to submit your proposal (abstract and list of key references) for this exciting new feature in Toxicological Sciences.