

EDITORIAL

A NEW ERA IN VETERINARY IMMUNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

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The importance of the creation of a new international journal of "Veterinary Immunology and Immunopathology" is apparent following the emergence of veterinary immunology as an identifiable discipline and the vital part played by investigations of animal models of immunological diseases of man.

The journal will contain papers on basic immunology of domestic animals and on the many disease processes that result in domestic and laboratory animals from immunologic defects. It should thus have a wide appeal to workers in all immunologically related disciplines. Papers will be refereed by members of an international editorial advisory board.

INTRODUCTION

The launching of a new journal must inevitably raise questions relating to its goals and objectives. Is it necessary and what is it going to achieve? These are all questions that we should address in this first issue of "Veterinary Immunology and Immunopathology".

The veterinary profession, still small in numbers but growing fast, is far-flung world wide with little drawing it together and little in the way of specific forums to voice itself. What is true of the profession as a whole is naturally also true of its component parts, and immunology is no exception. International journals can be a remarkable unifying force. Such journals usually result from the efforts of societies or organizations but this one does not.

Hopefully the forces will be reversed and the formation of an International Society for Veterinary Immunology would be a logical result.

POSITION OF VETERINARY IMMUNOLOGY

Veterinary trained scientists are already playing a major role in many of the life-science scientific disciplines - immunology being a shining example. Few of the major immunology groups in the world do not have, or have not had, veterinarians amongst them. In no way is this discussion intended to detract from the very important role that scientists from other disciplines play in the total spectrum of veterinary and comparative immunology. There is but one medicine, and a unified and multidisciplinary approach to the biological sciences ensures optimum use of resources and maximizes the return on research investment. No one discipline on its own can meet this challenge, and we intend that this new journal should find readers amongst basic laboratory animal immunologists and other related areas.

Increasing restrictions on anything that could be construed as experimentation in man ensures that the animal model will assume ever increasing importance. Nowhere is this more pivotal than in immunology. Spontaneous animal models for almost every immunologically mediated disease of man have already been identified in domestic or laboratory animals. Those that have not been identified have in many instances not been the subject of a systematic in-depth search. The development and characterization of these models cannot adequately proceed without the active participation and indeed the leadership of the veterinary profession who are, after all, trained in the correct and logical approach to these entities as well as their initial identification. It is our prediction that comparative medicine - and in particular comparative immunology, is going to be a major scientific force in the future.

With the above-mentioned background, a questionnaire was distributed to workers in this and allied fields in 36 countries regarding the potential value of an international journal of veterinary immunology. There was an overwhelming response in favour of the establishing the present journal (82%).

POSITION OF THIS JOURNAL

A medium for dissemination of information and exchange of ideas in this emerging field is thus urgently needed, and it is this role that "Veterinary Immunology and Immunopathology" hopes to assume. Currently such material is diffused amongst a plethora of unlikely and unrelated journals and much is lost to key investigators. Journals have proliferated at such a rate and often in random and somewhat illogical directions that the extraction and collation of necessary information is difficult and time-consuming. In addition to publishing quality original papers on areas of veterinary and comparative immunological interest, it will thus be our objective that each issue will contain an invited review paper on a subject of current importance.

Another role that this journal will play is in veterinary education. Curricula have in most parts of the world suffered from an inappropriate dearth of immunology. What little is taught is often so basic that it has a negative impact on the potential interest of the student. Immunology forms an inescapable and truly exciting part of everyday veterinary (and medical) practice. It is, therefore, our intention that this journal will strike a balance between the basic and the applied. We hope it will kindle some fires in potential future contributors to this exciting and rapidly advancing field.

All manuscripts submitted will be refereed by at least two members of an international Editorial Advisory Board who will make recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief. Papers should be sent to : the Editorial Secretariat, "Veterinary Immunology and Immunopathology P.O Box 330, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Contributors from North America can submit papers directly to the North American Editor-in-Chief, Dr Richard E Halliwell, University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine, JHMHC Box J.126, Gainesville, Florida 32610, U.S.A.

SCOPE OF THE JOURNAL

The scope will include:-

- Basic immunology (fundamental research on the immune system of animals)
- Immunology of spontaneous tumors in animals
- Research on experimental transplantations
- Immunochemistry (studies on Ig classes and subclasses of animals, complement and other)

- New techniques and developments in veterinary immunodiagnosis
- Immunological aspects of pregnancy and transfer of passive immunology
- Comparative immunology
- Immunogenetics, including research on bloodgroups
- Biological properties of immunoglobulins
- Clinical immunology in animals
- Those aspects of immunoprophylaxis, immunology and immunopathology of parasitic and infectious diseases that help in the understanding of immunologic systems

As far as laboratory animals are concerned, very specialized studies that pertain to the understanding of fundamental immunologic principles will in general not be included.

NATURE OF PAPERS

The journal will aim to include papers of the highest level, which should be of international interest; this does not exclude papers that are based on national or regional studies or case histories, but the methodology applied, results obtained, conclusions drawn or views developed on the basis of the regional material should be of much wider importance. Each article will be preceded by a brief abstract, as is conventional in scientific journals. There will be no rigid restrictions on the length of papers. The editor will decide in each case whether the importance of the content warrants the number of pages needed to print it. Nor will there be a limitation on the number of illustrations, but they should contribute to the understanding of the paper. All papers should be in English.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We believe we have presented a logical and important case for the existence of this journal and the scope that it should have. We see it filling many gaps and playing many important roles. We hope finally that contributors and readers alike will feel free to address any suggestions and criticisms on any aspects to the Editorial Secretariat.

We are excited about the future and we look forward to working with the Editorial Advisory Board as well as contributors and readers to ensure that it is the success that we know it should be.