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Nanomedicine: transcending from embryonic to adolescent

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Sometime in 2006 we embarked on a journey to establish a focused, accurate and well-respected scientific publication to reflect the excitement, opportunities as well as the scepticism and potential risks surrounding the newly fledged sub-field of nanomedicine. Almost 3 years later both the Editors and the Publishers of this journal are all delighted to see *Nanomedicine* at the publishing forefront of the field, with very rapid acceptances in most bibliographic search engines including PubMed and the ISI Science Citation Index and a very respectable first Impact Factor of 2.818. That numerically places our journal in the top-10 tier of journals with highest impact factors (number 9 out of 47) in the ISI Subject Category ‘NANOSCIENCE & NANOTECHNOLOGY’ and on number 38 out of 138 journals listed in the ISI Subject Category ‘BIOTECHNOLOGY & APPLIED MICROBIOLOGY’.

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Based on this performance, first we want to sincerely thank all of the readers, authors, reviewers and Editorial Board members that made this happen with their highly valued contributions. Second, I would like to take this opportunity to express my conviction that this year signifies yet another beginning for the journal: the beginning of a new phase of maturity that will be more difficult and more challenging. It is relatively simple – even though exceedingly risky – to initiate and establish a new journal at this day and age of high technology, high number and high turnaround of products. Even more so, in the broader field of nanotechnology

there has been a flurry of new journals, e-journals, blogs, databases, books and other alternative sources of information. It is very difficult even for us deeply involved in ‘nano’ research and development to distinguish quality from quantity, so it will become apparent that success will be measured by the longer term survival and growth of these publications. Success will also be measured by those qualitative factors, such as the appeal and recognition that a journal shares among a scientific community, which numerics are generally difficult to reflect. We aspire to sustain *Nanomedicine* at this level of quality and recognition while at the same time continuing the development of the journal into its adolescent phase by increasing its published volume and the number of issues per year to eight.

On embarking in this new phase, I attempted to compile a few simple recommendations I would like to share with our readers and contributors that can help us all transcend from the embryonic stage – and highly anticipatory – to the more mature phase that will need to show achievements in improving clinical practice for the benefit of patients, and delivering nanomedicine to hospital wards.

Recommendation number 1: avoid hyping up nanomedicine research

The mixture of new, young and dynamic technological advances, as in nanomedicine, that hold such great promise for almost all clinical specialties and practices will almost inevitably to generate interest, anticipation and anxiety for the returns in investment. It is the role of the contributors of our journal (among others) to explain the true and accurate state of development and avoid deterministic conclusions about the elimination of diseases or revolutionary treatments before these are realized. The funding environment in a lot of countries is also

forcing some members of our scientific community to 'oversell' their findings in a manner that can be misleading and hyped-up. Creating false expectations and promising unrealistic timelines to funding agencies, corporations or the public that may be funding our research is extremely risky for all of us involved. Debunking of hyped research can easily lead to decade-long setbacks of a credible and interesting scientific area. We need to make sure that this does not happen to nanomedicine. In the journal *Nanomedicine* we would like to encourage description of data, findings and opinions that give a balanced reflection of the state-of-the-art in the respective area in the complete absence of 'nano-hype'.

**Recommendation number 2:
be pro-active against the creation
of 'nano-fear factors'**

A few times already in the short history of our field, the creation of fear seems particularly appealing to the mass media. We have the responsibility to be pro-active against any misrepresentation of the scientific findings generated in our laboratories in order to avoid creation of 'nano-fear'. Once fear is created it is extremely difficult to be contained since it is then mainly dictated by psychological, instinctive reactions rather than logical, fact-based debate. In particular, those of us that are working in the areas of toxicology and safety of nanomaterials used in nanomedicine need to be aware and conscious of the way to address and communicate the possible risks to human (or animal) health that are revealed by our research both to scientific and the mass media. Our recommendation would be to communicate science with the public accurately. If simplistic explanations are not possible, try not to make them. It is preferable to be less appealing to the mass media rather than inaccurate and dangerously appealing. Of course, accuracy and simplicity in science communication with the public is the optimum choice, however, most of the time, in many scientific areas, this is not possible.

**Recommendation 3: submit your good
quality research to *Nanomedicine***

Since one of our central aims in this new phase of the journal is sustainability of high quality and growth of the volume of work we will be

able to publish, we would like to encourage all stakeholders in this field to consider submission of their best work in *Nanomedicine*. The journal at the moment is offering a highly visible platform with an ISI Impact Factor anticipated to rise even further. We need to embrace the journal as a reflection of our field: dynamic and top-quality, visible and promising. A journal that will benefit from our contributions, but also one that our laboratories will benefit from too. This mutual relationship can only work if all of us submit some of our best primary research work and share some our best ideas reviewing interesting topics with the editorial team in *Nanomedicine*.

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We believe that the work performed in the last 3 years has successfully achieved our primary goals to create a journal of high quality and high visibility. All of us that started this project believe that we have placed *Nanomedicine* among those journals that are positioned to reflect on its pages a field with the potential to revolutionize the way medicine is practiced. The only way to succeed in transcending from the embryonic to the adolescent stage of development, as a journal and a field overall, is to show that we can deliver both high caliber scientific knowledge along with ingenious, beneficial and realistic contributions to clinical practice. With everyone's contributions we hope that *Nanomedicine* will become the primary point of reference in this rapidly maturing and exciting field.

Financial & competing interests disclosure

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No writing assistance was utilized in the production of this manuscript.