

## Editorial

## A Message from the New Editor-in-Chief

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I am truly honored to be the new Editor-in-Chief of *Molecular Cancer Therapeutics*. *MCT* is a well-respected AACR journal with a major focus on oncology drug discovery and preclinical development. Its most recent Impact Factor, 5.599, as published by Thomson Reuters, attests to a solid position in the landscape of oncology journals. The emphasis placed on quality rather than quantity of published articles by the former Editors-in-Chief, Daniel Von Hoff and John Reed, was valuable and has served the journal well.

We are experiencing an exceptional period for cancer research and therapy. Major advances in cancer genomics, epigenetics, proteomics, and metabolism have expanded our horizons dramatically and are revolutionizing treatment. Novel therapies have resulted in meaningful clinical benefits—even in malignancies that until recently were completely intractable. Personalized treatments tailored to each patient's molecular profile are not only a promise but, in an increasing number of cases, a reality. The number of new molecular entities entering clinical trials is simply staggering.

Notwithstanding this progress, over 90% of Phase III clinical trials in oncology still fail to meet their primary endpoints, emphasizing the hurdles in fulfilling the vision of dramatically improving survival (or achieving a cure) in most cancer patients. This high failure rate indicates that much work is needed to improve not only safety and efficacy of new drugs, but also predictability of preclinical and early-stage clinical studies, and strategies for clinical drug development.

*MCT*, by virtue of its unique focus, is particularly well positioned to address several of the aforementioned challenges.

The Journal will be organized in the following sections:

### Reviews and Highlights

High-profile reviews can serve to encourage submission of quality primary research articles. Possible review topics could include novel drugs, molecular pathways, mechan-

isms of action of oncology drugs, chemical biology, nanotechnology, biomarkers, drug resistance, and new technologies. Unsolicited reviews will be welcomed, but priority will be given to invited review articles from leaders in the field from academia and industry.

### Small Molecule Therapeutics

This section includes articles on discovery and preclinical development of small molecule entities. It is clearly fundamental. "Chemical Therapeutics" and "Small Molecule Therapeutics" were previously represented in separate Journal sections. "Chemical Therapeutics" included both synthetic and natural compounds, while "Small Molecules Therapeutics" covered molecules of various natures such as peptides. Considering that synthetic compounds (that represent the majority of new molecular entities) are typically referred to as "small molecules," we will have one section, "Small Molecule Therapeutics," which will encompass discovery and preclinical studies on all novel, low-molecular-weight therapeutic agents.

### Large Molecule Therapeutics

This section includes articles on novel large molecule therapeutics, primarily (but not exclusively) antibodies. In view of the success of monoclonal antibodies and, more recently, of antibody–drug conjugates, I would expect this section to grow and to become increasingly important.

### Cancer Biology and Signal Transduction

The main focus of this section will be studies in which oncology drugs are used primarily as tools to address biological/mechanistic questions. Many articles recently published in *MCT* fall in this category. Among others, articles on signal transduction and mechanisms of drug resistance will be a key aspect of this section.

### Companion Diagnostic and Cancer Biomarkers

It appears increasingly clear that perceived oncology drug limitations often reflect inadequate or poor patient selection. Clearly, the need for biomarkers and, ideally, companion diagnostics is critical. Previously, papers on biomarkers were published throughout the Journal.

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Collecting such papers in a specific section represents an appropriate change, which was instituted by John Reed. Occasionally, clinical papers reporting on molecular therapeutic insights that may inform personalized medicine will be published in this section.

### Models and Technologies

A section focusing on novel technologies was envisioned by John Reed. I believe that it has great potential and hope it will attract high-quality papers on novel *in vitro* and *in vivo* models, screening platforms, nanotechnology, drug delivery, and, in general, any approach that has the potential to advance discovery and evaluation of anticancer drugs.

In conclusion, *MCT* has tremendous potential and is on track to be the top choice for submitting the best oncology

drug discovery and preclinical studies. Together with an outstanding Editorial Board, I will do my best to realize *MCT*'s potential, building on the excellent work done by its two previous Editors-in-Chief.



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