OPEN

Citation: Cell Death and Disease (2014) 5, e1041; doi:10.1038/cddis.2014.15

www.nature.com/cddis

Editorial

1000 successes as CDDIS reaches 1000 published papers!

G Melino*[,1,2]

Cell Death and Disease (2014) **5,** e1041; doi:10.1038/cddis.2014.15; published online 30 January 2014

Even though it feels like just a few months ago, CDDIS was actually launched in 2010, meaning we are now almost at the ends its 4th year of publication.[1] Moreover, in a felicitous conjunction, this coincides with publishing our 1000th paper. This is a remarkable achievement and bears witness to the trust the scientific community places in our journals. This must lead us to ask: what are the reasons for this success; what are the challenges ahead; how can we build on such success to ensure that CDDIS strives for an even better service in future?

The motivation behind launching CDDIS was relatively simple. In the successful wake of our leading journal, *Cell Death and Differentiation* (CDD), we received an ever-increasing number of the top-quality submissions. However, *force majeure* – the limited number of pages that we were able to print – compelled us, reluctantly, to reject papers of indisputable merit. We had no difficulty in establishing that more than 100 papers each year were subsequently published in journals elsewhere, rated with impact factors between 4 and 6. In so doing, the authors had been obliged to reformat, resubmit, respond to further reviewers' comments and conduct further experiments – all this requiring additional time, staff and costs. Therefore, why not transfer these already-reviewed manuscripts to a *new* journal directly?[2] Moreover, we would create an opportunity to move from the strictly mechanistic cell-death field[3,4] towards a more clinical, translational view. A name for the new title seemed obvious: *Cell Death & Disease*, CDDIS. To circumvent the imbalance in papers *versus* pages, we opted for the more up-to-date model of online only, as well as open access. Umbrella branding under the *Nature Publishing Group* and synergy with our core publication, CDD, together with this progressive approach, generated a warm and widespread welcome among our scientific readership.

Was this, as might be implied, no better than a cynical commercial exercise to make money by publishing low quality work? Or, was it a genuine scientific success story? I should like to answer from two perspectives.

First, the readership's rapid, positive reaction has far exceeded expectations. This was obvious from the following:

- the number of submissions made immediately (Figure 1a),
- the high percentage of authors who accepted automatic transfer from CDD to CDDIS,
- the fact that it was read and cited even before we were in Medline and had an impact factor,
- the particularly high impact factor obtained was >5 on first evaluation; now it is >6 (Figure 1b).

The respect CDDIS has earned itself in these four short years is further reflected in the burgeoning number of direct submissions, and that we are now celebrating the 1000th paper published.

Second, the concept of a sister journal has been imitated by other journals in the same publishing family – such as *Oncogene*, *Leukemia* and even *Nature* itself, as well as by journals not published by NPG (for example, *Cell Reports*). CDDIS in not just a downmarket version of CDD with a translational perspective, while CDD itself retains greater focus on underlying molecular mechanisms of cell death but together they complement each other in the same arena. It is also very clear that authors fully understand and endorse this concept, while 1000 published manuscripts of such impact is the plainest evidence of success.

At the beginning of last year, I stepped down as Editor-in-Chief, paving the way for two excellent new Editors, Eric Baehrecke, from Worcester (USA), and Yufang Shi, from Shanghai (China), to demonstrate their (considerable) worth and inject new blood alongside our new ideas. So now the Old Continent, with Guido Kroemer, is supported by the old New World and the new New World. We are considering head-hunting an Editor from Antarctica – mechanisms of cell death in frostbite injury, perhaps? The journal's presence in the Far East is further bolstered by a yearly Meeting in China, with the participation of several, leading international scientists. As for the spiraling Chinese submissions, this large community has responded with incredible enthusiasm. Leaving my formal role does not in the least mean withdrawing my interest and support. On the contrary, relinquishing overall responsibility means that I can help and contribute to this now well-established journal far more than previously and at a grass-root level – particularly in view of continuing growth.

[1]Department of Experimental Medicine and Surgery, Biochemistry Laboratory, IDI-IRCCS, University of Rome 'Tor Vergata', 00133 Rome, Italy and [2]Medical Research Council, Toxicology Unit, Hodgkin Building, Leicester University, Lancaster Road, P.O. Box 138, Leicester LE1 9HN, UK
*Corresponding author: G Melino, Department of Experimental Medicine and Surgery, Biochemistry Laboratory, IDI-IRCCS, University of Rome 'Tor Vergata', Via Tor Vergata, via Montpellier 1, Rome 00133, Italy. Tel: +39 6 204 27299; Fax: +39 6 204 27290; E-mail: melino@uniroma2.it

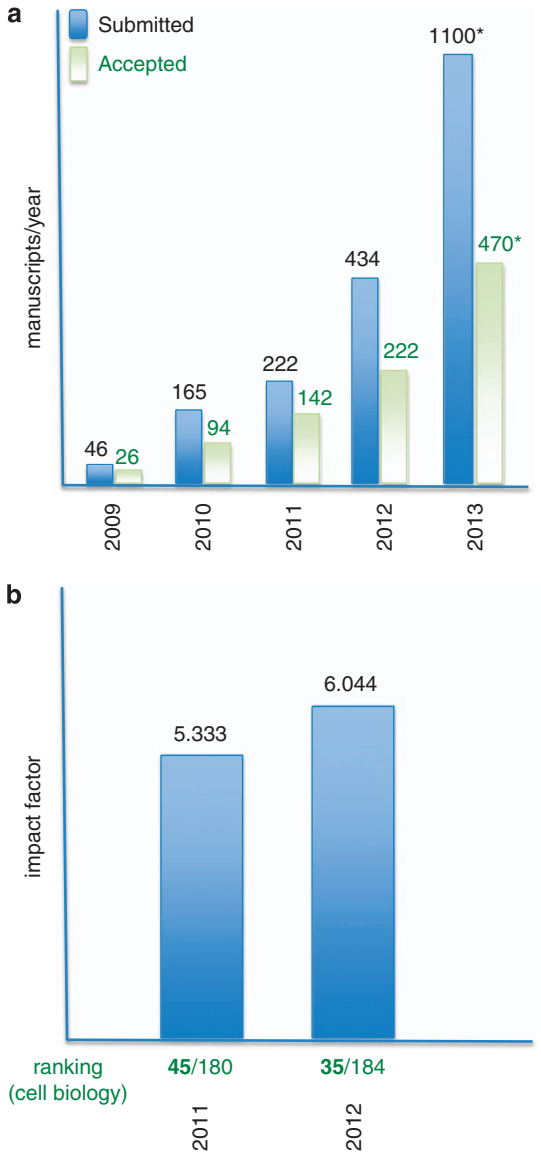

Figure 1 Papers and impact factor of CDDIS. (**a**) Paper flow in CDDIS. Number of manuscripts per year submitted to (blue) and accepted in (green) CDDIS. Although CDDIS was published since January 2010, some papers were already submitted and accepted by the end of 2009. The star indicates an estimated number. (**b**) CDDIS impact factor. The histogram shows the Impact factor by ISI-Web of Knowledge (Thomson Reuters) referring to the years 2011 and 2012; the ranking (in green) in the cell biology category is shown over the total number of journals listed in that category

How do we see CDDIS evolving? What are the challenges ahead of us? Of course we want the scientific community to contribute views and suggestions. We are indeed at its service. However, let us begin by offering a few thoughts.

Accessibility

The pace of technological advances has profound implications for the evaluation and dissemination of scientific information. The model of author-pay has already opened unexpectedly innovative ways to access and spread knowledge. One simple development will be to make available an 'APP' for CDDIS (and CDD), further facilitating open access to the journal. As in science itself, change is often as much technology-led as concept-led. The generation of ideas is a random and largely unmanageable process, and informal discussions are now just as easy via social media (although perhaps requiring more than 140 characters) as a chat in the pub (although perhaps less convivial). Indeed, new communication technology will change the whole discipline of the scientific paper. Can we put experimental data online as soon as they come in and provide interested scientists an opportunity to comment immediately? How would this affect management's ability to evaluate scientific achievement? Another aspect is the volume of non-public scientific information, which may even exceed the portion in the public domain. We are shadowing these developments closely, leaving behind the era of dusty photocopying in the library and moving into uncharted territory. We no longer adhere to Darwinian vertical transmission of scientific ideas but have progressed to Lamarckian and horizontal transmission. We'll see what the 'APP' era brings.

Interactivity

Blogs, webinar, Twitter and Facebook will facilitate author–reader interaction, maybe only using the journal as an intermediary. Superficially, this is just technology and fashion. In reality the core of interaction between scientists, readers, laymen, institutions, publishers and editors is at a crucial, evolutionary juncture. In fact, embryonically the central concept of creating CDDIS was one of interactivity, via online and open access as new media.

New scientific directions

CDD was the discussion forum for a new community raised around the then novel concept of cell death.[3] This has now expanded and fused with more classical differentiation paths[5] and, quite recently, with more translational and pathology-oriented trends. Today, cell death is fully integrated into the field of cell biology and is rapidly moving towards clinical significance and therapeutic application. CDDIS will follow this latter development with much enthusiasm.

Young voices

We have already added numerous 'young' group leaders, 'lesser-known' names, 'lower H-index' scientists and 'less-cited' people to the editorial board. The brain is the last organ to develop but its maturity only precedes senility. Did Ancient Greek culture prevent its decay? Did Roman sophistication prevent ruin? Did the Italian Renaissance prevent its end? We need the unbridled enthusiasm, brute strength, untested faith in the future and raw innovation of the young generation. We need their ingenuity, their faith that the world is honest and that science will improve it. Ingenuity is the word. It brings energy, untried strength and uncompromising integrity. Yes, we'll take on-board more 'low-profile' youngsters! Integrity is the other word.

Scientific Integrity

The advent of digitalized image software, open access and more people with time to spare has facilitated scientific awareness but has abetted the chances of unexpected and less easily detectable manipulation which, of themselves, are a danger to science. I refer not only to scientific fraud proper but also to the more subtle and even more important distinction between science and pseudoscience, to Richard Feynman's *Cargo Cult* 'science'. There is a risk that highlighting honest mistakes, which do not invalidate scientific conclusions, will generate as much publicity as does the much rarer, deliberate falsification, encouraging intelligent-design creationists or climate-change deniers to believe that all science is phoney and untrustworthy. We are neither police, nor a court of law, and, even less, a theological inquisition, but we have a duty to keep our readers informed of potential concerns, and interact with the Institutions in which alleged malpractice has occurred. Akin to scientific integrity is the reproducibility of published data. Industry has already alerted our community. These 'hot' topics are highly debated in other, more appropriate settings[6] yet we do, and will further ensure, that such important issues stay among the forefront of our editorial agenda.

Peer Review

Is peer review still the gold standard? Is there a better method? Is reviewing at 10 and 5 impact factors different? Should this be anonymous or open to post-publication blogs? Equally important are the criteria and variables selected to support the system. Clearly this is an important ongoing debate.[7]

Impact Factor

What do the impact factor and citation mean in reality? If we adopt the distinction of descriptive, correlative, mechanistic and physiologically/pathologically relevant papers, roughly corresponding to impact factors 3-5-9-20, respectively, CDD and CDDIS belong to the third and second arenas. This does not imply a judgment, as all science is one, and science is (or should be) a representation of truth. Having said this, the current CDDIS impact factor, higher than 6, seems to me an overevaluation, and with the current rate of acceptance I am sure we will return to a more realistic value of 5 ± 0.2, still a highly respectable achievement. Furthermore, CDDIS should not expend too much effort on the rather sterile race toward high impact factors but rather concentrate on providing, synergistically with CDD, a high-quality service to our contributors, readers and correspondents.

On a similar note, a final word of thanks goes to our readers, to our authors, to our editors, indeed to all our extended, scientific family. The success of CDDIS could not have been achieved without the incredible support of our editorial office and publisher, Nature Publishing Group, and in particular that of Dr. Margherita Annicchiarico-Petruzzelli, Dr. Alison Mitchell, Rebecca Vickerstaff and Pooja Aggarwal. A big round of applause to all of you, and here's to many more thousands of successes.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of Interest.

1. Knight RA, Melino G. *Cell Death Dis* 2011; **2**: e202.
2. Knight RA, Melino G. *Cell Death Differ* 2012; **19**: 185.
3. Galluzzi L *et al. Cell Death Differ* 2012; **19**: 107–120.
4. Vendenabeele P, Melino G. *Cell Death Differ* 2012; **19**: 1093–1095.
5. Levine AJ. *Cell Death Differ* 2011; **18**: 1391–1392.
6. Yong E, Ledford H, van Noorden R. *Nature* 2013; **503**: 454–457.
7. Ploegh H. *Nature* 2011; **472**: 391.