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EDITORIAL

Parlez vous immunology?

Michael Way (Editor-in-Chief)

As cell biologists, we may not understand all the specifics of each other's fields but, for the most part, we all speak a fairly common language: blots, imaging, pulldowns, antibodies, knockouts, RNAi, organelles, forces, migration, trafficking and, more recently, CRISPR. However, there is one group of cell biologists who have their own special language, well, at least to me. We all know the immune system is very important for life, but immunology is a black box for many of us – all CD this-and-that numbers and sandstorm plots (sorry, FACS analysis). And how do they decide where to put those boxes anyway? I do try to go to immunology talks in our institute, but often I come out frustrated that I cannot follow the details or I feel more confused. I guess this is to be expected as I was never any good at foreign languages at school. However, I really wish I could speak immunology as right now the field is booming, especially with the prospect of new therapies that harness the power of the immune system to fight cancer and other diseases.

As with lessons at school, however, I do occasionally get the message, as some immunologists make the effort to speak our lingo, removing all that jargon and those endless 'sandstorm' plots. In fact, I suspect that these scientists are really just cell biologists pretending to be immunologists. The good thing for Journal of Cell Science is that we even have some of these enlightened immunologists on our Editorial Advisory Board, and they are not all called Michael: Michael Sixt (IST Austria), Michael Dustin (University of Oxford, UK) and Gillian Griffiths (CIMR, UK).

However, maybe the problem lies with us, the cell biologists, and we should be encouraging more immunologists to consider publishing their work in the journals that card-carrying cell biologists read. After all, immunologists do look at cells, including natural killers (what a cool name is that!), rather than our more common garden varieties like HeLa, 3T3, HEK and Cos. I also think you'll agree that movies of immune cells interacting with other cells and migrating through tissues and lymph nodes as they go about their job protecting us from infection are truly stunning.

It is therefore a great pleasure to announce that the fourth Journal of Cell Science Special Issue will focus on the cell biology of the immune system and yes, sandstorm plots are welcome. This Special Issue will be guest edited by Ana-Maria Lennon-Duménil (https://science.institut-curie.org/research/integrated-biology/u932-immunity-and-cancer/team-lennon-dumenil/), who is bilingual in immunology and cell biology. Ana-Maria graduated as a biologist from the University of Chile, earned a PhD in immunogenetics at Institut Pasteur in Paris and next moved to Harvard Medical School in the USA for a postdoc in the lab of immunologist and biochemist Hidde Ploegh. In 2004, she started her own research group in the immunology department at Institut Curie. Her research aims to unravel the fundamental mechanisms involved in the polarization and migration of immune cells by combining live cell and tissue imaging with biophysics.

Ana-Maria Lennon-Duménil

We will welcome submissions for our Special Issue on the Cell Biology of the Immune System until July 2019. The Special Issue will also contain reviews and poster articles, commissioned by our in-house reviews editors. We look forward to working with Ana-Maria on this exciting Special Issue, and invite you to contact us at jcs@biologists.com about any potential submissions.