Foreword

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Welcome to the 14th volume of *Future Virology*

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First draft submitted: 21 November 2018; Accepted for publication: 21 November 2018; Published online: 13 December 2018

Keywords: antiviral immunity • coronavirus • herpesvirus • HIV • human papillomavirus • virology

To our readers, we would like to wish you a very happy new year from all of us here at Future Medicine and introduce you to the 14th volume of *Future Virology*. I would like to begin 2019 with a thank you to our readers, esteemed Editorial Board, peer reviewers and contributing authors for giving their continued support. We look forward to working with you all in the forthcoming year! This foreword presents some of our content highlights from 2018 alongside some exciting future prospects for the journal, in the year ahead.

Content highlights

2018 was another successful year for *Future Virology*. The journal fulfilled its purpose by publishing exciting current research from the experts in the field, comprised of a varied spread representative of the fast-evolving world of virology. The top read article, at the time of writing (October 2018), was an original research article entitled 'Distribution of human papillomavirus genotypes (2014–2016) in women with genital warts at a sexually transmitted disease clinic in Beijing, China' written by Ma *et al* [1]. With the use of genotyping, this work aimed to characterize how different HPVs were distributed across Beijing in 350 females. The team observed a bias toward subtypes HPV6 + 11, alongside prevalence of other high-risk subtypes, providing vital data to allow for improved vaccine specificity, and thus efficacy, in Beijing.

Second to this, for the highest reads was 'Defective (interfering) viral genomes re-explored: impact on antiviral immunity and virus persistence' written by Manzoni and López [2]. This review article revisits studies into the by-products of RNA viral replication, defective viral genomes, in light of new advances discovering the immunomodulatory and pro-persisting effects they encourage.

A further highly popular article was a short communications piece 'Targeting HPV16 DNA using CRISPR/Cas inhibits anal cancer growth *in vivo*', written by Hsu *et al* [3]. Here, adeno-associated viral vectors encoding Cas-9 and control or HPV16-specific guide RNAs, were used to edit HPV16 genes, *E6* or *E7*, which resulted in significantly slowed anal tumor growth, in immuno-deficient mice models.

The final article to mention is an editorial authored by Sheahan & Baric. The piece entitled 'Is regulation preventing the development of therapeutics that may prevent future coronavirus pandemics?' discusses the controversial balance of regulation versus innovation, with a focus toward how new policies have affected coronaviral therapeutic progression, among other viruses [4]. It concludes by looking into the future, suggesting that implementation of such strict regulations may be a more dangerous risk, through inability to discover, than that of the risks that come with biosafety.

Readership demographics

It is always interesting to consider the demography of our contents impact, as it continues to change with the increasing growth of *Future Virology*. The year 2018 saw a large increase in the proportion of readership in Asia, continuing on the 9% growth seen in 2017, expanding from 23 to 33% and determining Asia as our biggest content reader. Our content was next most read by experts in the USA (31%) and in Europe (24%) (Figure 1). We expect to see continued growth in emerging scientific communities, particularly in areas afflicted by viral outbreaks. We hope to continue our work toward reaching a truly globalized audience.

Figure 1. *Future Virology* readership demographic 2018.

Top Altmetric articles

We have been working with Altmetric since 2015 to help visualize where the articles we publish are having online impact. A special acknowledgment goes out to this year's top three articles, which all scored in the top 25% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric, in *Future Virology*.

- The article with the highest score was a review article entitled 'Antiviral therapeutic approaches for human rhinovirus infections' [5] which was in the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.
- Second top score was the aforementioned editorial piece entitled 'Is regulation preventing the development of therapeutics that may prevent future coronavirus pandemics?' [4].
- Coming in third place, was another editorial 'Possible implications of maternal HIV infection for increasing measles susceptibility in young infants' [6].

Social media

Future Virology remains active across social media and you can stay up-to-date with the latest on Twitter (@fsgfvl) and LinkedIn, where our following has continued to rise [7]. Across these platforms we consider forthcoming research in the field of virology, as well as current news, journal highlights and newly published articles. Through these mediums we are able to enjoy engaging with our readers and experts in the field.

Infectious Diseases Hub

Future Virology is proudly partnered with Infectious Diseases Hub [8], a free-access online resource that provides a platform to allow quick access to the latest, essential research to its members on all aspects of virology and microbiology, from the bench to the bedside. Breaking news, exclusive features, interviews, peer-reviewed articles and more are covered in Infectious Diseases Hub, provided by Future Science Group [9]. Furthermore, three articles from the current issue are nominated each month to feature on Infectious Disease Hub, at the discretion of the editor. One standout example was the peek behind the paper of 'Latent versus productive infections: the alpha herpesvirus switch' with lead author, Lynn Enquist [10,11]. Infectious Disease Hub not only offered free access to the full article to all its members, but gave an exclusive interview where important big hurdles for α herpesvirus are discussed, with an outlook to future directions [11]. This affiliation has allowed the content of *Future Virology* to have wider global reach and increased dissemination and influence through a multitude of different platforms.

Conference attendance

Following previous years, members of the *Future Virology* department attended a number of conferences, meetings and events around the world allowing us to meet our readers, authors, editorial board members and collaborators, as well as keep up-to-date with the field and ensure full coverage of all the latest and ground-breaking research. In 2018, we attended the following events:

- Microbiology Society annual conference (10–13 April, Birmingham, UK)

- The European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) (21–24 April, Madrid, Spain)
- American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Microbe (7–11 June, Atlanta, GA, USA)

The *Future Virology* team looks forward to attending more conferences to continue further journal development. To follow which events the team will attend in 2019, please follow the journal on Twitter [12], join our LinkedIn group [8] or become a member of IDHub for free [9].

Conclusion

As always, any feedback the virology community wishes to share is appreciated, whether this be recommendations of up-and-coming areas you think deserve coverage or advice on the future direction of our content, corresponding to changing directions in the field. We welcome unsolicited research, review, editorial and opinion article proposals, among others, and would be delighted to hear from you if you are interested in submitting to the journal. We are especially interested in submissions covering key aspects of virology, including:

- The molecular basis of viral diseases
- Virus–host interactions
- New and re-emerging viruses
- Epidemiologic studies and trends
- Advances in oncolytic viral therapy, viral gene therapy and viral immunotherapy
- Vaccines and antiviral agents
- Adverse events and drug safety
- The problem of viral drug resistance and potential methods to overcome this
- Pharmacoeconomics and cost–benefit issues in virology
- The use of viral vectors in gene therapy and functional genomics
- Defense against the use of viruses in bioterrorism
- Real-world evidence and outcomes research

Financial & competing interests' disclosure

The author is an employee of Future Science Group. The author has no other relevant affiliations or financial involvement with any organization or entity with a financial interest in or financial conflict with the subject matter or materials discussed in the manuscript apart from those disclosed.

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

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