

## STEM CELLS Appoints Four Associate Editors

Stem Cells is proud to announce the appointment of four new associate editors. Working closely with us in the peer review process, they will be vital in maintaining the standards of excellence in research that the journal has achieved over its 25-year span. Each is a world leader in their field and brings many years of experience to our team. Their expertise covers a broad array of stem cell topics, including embryonic stem cells (ESC), mesenchymal stem cells (MSC), hematopoietic stem cells (HSC), regenerative medicine, and translational medicine.

Jan A. Nolta, Ph.D., is Director of the Stem Cell program at UC Davis. She is currently overseeing the construction of a new 100,000 square-foot facility on the Sacramento Health Sciences campus, which will become the research hub for over 100 multidisciplinary faculty members and their teams, and will include a Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) facility to bring stem cell therapies to patients throughout northern and central California.

Her laboratory examines the recruitment of human adult and ESC to areas of tissue damage in immune deficient mice, with the aim of developing improved therapies for treating disease. As a graduate student at the University of Southern California, she participated in the first gene therapy trial to treat newborns for ADA deficiency, which shaped her career in translational medicine. Since then, she has specialized in translational, or bench-to-bedside science, and has been involved in 18 clinical trials of gene and cell therapy. "Some of the most exciting recent reports to me are those that use hESC in xenotransplantation models to

assess safety and efficacy for future application to tissue regeneration."

Dr. Nolta has served on over 40 National Institutes of Health review panels and is a full-time member of the Hematopoiesis Study Section at the NIH. She has published more than 75 peer-reviewed manuscripts and has authored 15 book chapters related to stem cells and regenerative medicine research. She recently served as editor of the book *Genetic Engineering of Mesenchymal Stem Cells*, published in 2006. "I am happy to be an associate editor because I can contribute to the further success of this outstanding journal, which has truly become my favorite, and has been the most-read journal in my laboratory over the past few years."

Majlinda Lako, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer in Stem Cells Sciences at the Institute of Human Genetics, Newcastle University. Her research group focuses on understanding the critical pathways and factors that are involved in the maintenance of pluripotency, self-renewal, and differentiation of hESC. She is also involved in studies examining the derivation of hematopoietic progenitors from ESC and in studies of retinal and limbal stem cell characterization, differentiation, and transplantation.

During her postdoctoral career, she was a member of the group that derived the first fully characterized hESC in the UK. She later published the breakthrough finding that dermal cells isolated from hair follicles can rescue the hematopoietic systems, suggesting the presence of HSC in the hair follicles and supporting a role for MSC in the follicle. She believes that one of

the most significant recent advances in stem cell research is the induction of pluripotency in somatic cells. “If the induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells prove to have the same characteristics as hESC, there are certainly possibilities for future therapies, but this first has to be built on a strong knowledge of their basic biology.”

Dr. Lako is a member of the International Stem Cell Initiative, a global collaborative effort to systematically characterize key features, genetics, and growth conditions of the many different hESC lines available worldwide. “I have seen Stem Cells go from strength to strength in the last 10 years. I would like to see an increase in the number of manuscripts associated with functional stem cell assays, and I am very happy to work towards that future with the rest of the editorial team.”

Margaret H. Baron, M.D., Ph.D., is The Irene and Arthur M. Fishberg Professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She is also Director of Hematology and Medical Oncology Research and Co-Director of the Graduate Program in Developmental and Stem Cell Biology (DSCB) and a member of the Black Family Stem Cell Institute.

Dr. Baron’s research program examines the mechanisms of cell fate decisions and the interactions of regulatory proteins in stem and progenitor cells of the mouse embryo, especially with respect to the development of the hematopoietic and cardiovascular systems. Her lab is also interested in understanding the molecular mechanisms involved in the development and maturation of primitive erythroid cells, which may lead to new approaches to red blood cell replacement therapies and the modulation of postnatal and adult hematopoietic and vascular development.

Dr. Baron’s research has covered a broad range of areas over the course of her career. Her Ph.D. thesis research with David Baltimore combined

enzymology, protein biochemistry, and RNA analysis to study poliovirus replication. For her postdoctoral training, she joined the lab of Tom Maniatis to study regulation of mammalian gene expression, focusing on globin gene switching during development. Her interest in stem cell biology was a natural outgrowth of her longstanding interests in the plasticity underlying the differentiated state and in developmental biology. She believes the work on iPS cells to be one of the most exciting and promising breakthroughs in stem cell biology in decades. “Whether or not such iPS cells ever make it directly to the clinic, it will almost certainly lead to many important discoveries about the mechanistic basis for many human diseases.” “This is a particularly exciting time for stem cell biology. The journal Stem Cells has increased steadily in quality and impact over the past few years, and I’d love to help the journal continue on this impressive trajectory by publishing papers of very high-quality and significance.”

Dr. Mark Pittenger, Ph.D., is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins University, and a consultant to businesses researching cellular therapies for regenerative medicine. He is on the scientific advisory board of Opexa Therapeutics, Inc., a company developing autologous cellular therapies to treat several major illnesses, including multiple sclerosis, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. He was previously Vice President of Research at Osiris Therapeutics, a leader in adult stem cell therapy, using MSC to repair various types of tissue. Prior to joining Osiris, he was a staff associate at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Dr. Pittenger holds five issued U.S. patents (two pending) relating to stem cells.

Dr. Pittenger has been a cell biologist for 25 years, with a strong interest in the regulation of gene expression, regulatory pathways, cancer biology, and structural biology. The opportunity to work on stem cells was a natural fit for him, and adult stem cells became his particular interest upon joining Osiris Therapeutics in 1994.

His research on MSC includes their isolation and characterization, imaging, trafficking, differentiation, and engraftment, especially in models of myocardial infarction. “ I believe the field needs a successful therapy that we can all point to and say cellular therapy works consistently, and predictably, so. Whether that will be graft versus host disease, bone or cartilage repair, improvement in cardiac function or ‘fixing’ a genetic condition by stem cells, we will have to wait and see. The successful translation of research findings to clinical therapies is essential.”

Dr. Pittenger published pioneering work on the isolation and characterization of multipotent MSCs in *Science* in 1999, which has since been cited in over 3,000 peer reviewed publications. He has also had recent work published showing that MSCs can modulate the immune response from different subsets of immune cells. He has published over 25 peer reviewed manuscripts and nine book chapters on MSCs and cellular therapy. “I want to see the field progress forward through high-quality papers that help everyone understand and answer important questions. *Stem Cells* has grown up with the field and is the preeminent journal for stem cells so I am proud to be associated with this journal.”

In addition to our new Associate Editors, *Stem Cells* is proud to announce the appointment of 19 new members to its Editorial Board. They are: Christian Andressen, Cedric Blanpain, Margaret Buckingham, David J. Curtis, Xing Dai, Stephen Dalton, Christian Dani, Petr Dvorak, Andreas Faissner, Stan Gronthos, Naoya Kobayashi, Toru Kondo, Lorenza Lazzari, Gianpaolo Papaccio, Ichiro Sekiya, Henrik Semb, Ludovic Vallier, Owen Witte, and Pamela Witte.

We look forward to the fresh ideas and high standards that each of our new Associate Editors and board members will bring to the publication. We welcome each on board and look forward to an increasingly successful future!

Dr. Donald G. Phinney and Dr. Miodrag Stojković,

Co-Editors, *Stem Cells*