

Introductory Editorial

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Welcome to the new journal *Lipid Insights*. This is a peer reviewed journal published by Libertas Academica, and like all their journals, *Lipid Insights* is open access. The scope of *Lipid Insights* includes all aspects of lipids: synthesis, biochemistry, biophysics, regulation, traffic (intracellular and extracellular), physiology, pharmacology, toxicology, new compounds, oleochemistry and industrial applications.

New ideas about lipids are of increasing significance. In economic terms, lipids impact heavily on modern societies in many ways, including via health issues such as the epidemic of obesity, diabetes and heart disease, and via geopolitical issues such as the use of lipids as renewable resources. In scientific terms, several major developments are leading to new understandings in lipidology. Firstly, genomics offers a more complete understanding of the entire range of biochemical pathways for the synthesis and degradation of lipids. Secondly, mass spectroscopic techniques allow the almost routine cataloguing of complex mixtures of lipids ("lipidomics"). Finally, there is a greater realization that lipids are active components of cells, as signalling molecules and as membrane components. Thus, in the future greater emphasis must be placed on studying the functions of lipids at the sub-cellular level. The location of a lipid within cells is an important question that goes along-side defining its biophysical properties and biochemical interactions.

We expect that *Lipid Insights* will attract manuscripts of the highest quality. Peer review is undertaken fairly and promptly by at least two leading experts in the area of the manuscript. Articles follow a consistent format that includes links to other web pages and unlimited use of colour. Therefore, the visual impact and practical value of articles will be high and comparable to that of the best hard-copy publications. However, an advantage of the electronic format over paper-based journals is that it allows the full use of digital technology. Large extra files, from data sets to animations, slide shows, and video clips, can all be embedded at no additional charge.

The method of publication is an extremely important aspect of the journal. *Lipid Insights* will be published exclusively online, and open access means precisely that: all articles are made freely available to all users via the world wide web. This method of publication is relatively new, only being made possible within the last decade or so, following the expansion of the internet to all corners of the globe. While more traditional subscription based journals may always have some place, open access publication is rapidly gaining ground. Many grant awarding bodies, both governmental and charitable, now prefer or even insist that papers are published in open access journals, and allow their funds to be used for this purpose, so that results deriving from their projects are widely and freely disseminated. A major reason behind this is to democratize the access to knowledge, a process of levelling the playing field that is a consistent feature of internet-based tools.

In hard-copy journals, the costs of publication are recovered largely by subscriptions paid by readers. For *Lipid Insights*, as in other open access journals, these costs are borne by authors in the form of a Publication Processing Fee. Authors retain copyright of their work and can grant anyone the right to reproduce and disseminate it, provided that it is correctly cited and no errors are introduced, under the Creative Commons "CC-BY" licence. In addition, Libertas Academica offer waivers and discounts of the fee on a case-by-case basis to facilitate publication in cases where the authors lack funds, for example because of the economic situation in their country of origin. Another advantage of a web-based journal devoted exclusively to lipids is that we can deliver ground-breaking information more rapidly than a hard-copy journal. Overall, open access publication allows us to meet our overall objective of publishing the best science to the benefit to this field.

For further information on what we hope will be an exciting and highly useful new journal, please click on the links in "About this Journal" box on the journal's website.

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