

Editorial

The *European Journal of Pharmaceutics and Biopharmaceutics (EJPB)* has established itself as a leading journal in the field of pharmaceutical sciences. In order to maintain and enhance this position the journal must not only publish papers of the highest scientific quality, but its papers must also reflect the direction of cutting edge research and innovation within pharmaceutical sciences. One such area is undoubtedly that of pharmaceutical biotechnology. The increasing importance of biotechnology within the pharmaceutical arena is reflected in the launch of a new theme section within the journal, commencing in this issue.

Although the exact wordings can differ, biotechnology may essentially be defined as the use of biological systems (e.g. cells, organisms or tissue) or biological molecules (e.g. enzymes) for/in the manufacture of products of commercial significance. In this context, of course, the application of biotechnology for pharmaceutical purposes is not new. Many pharmaceutical substances are of biological origin and substances such as various blood factors, antibodies, vaccines, therapeutic enzymes and hormones such as insulin may still be produced by direct extraction from their native biological source.

The advent of recombinant DNA technology (genetic engineering), however, ushered in the era of modern biotechnology, and the production of therapeutic proteins represented the first true industrial application of this technology. To date, in excess of 100 recombinant proteins have been approved for general medical use. Genetic engineering also facilitates the generation of engineered cells/viruses, and several such engineered viral particles have found medical application, particularly as veterinary viral vaccines and as gene therapy vectors.

Advances in allied biotechnology-based avenues of research continue to impact upon pharmaceutical science. Such advances include genomics and related technologies (e.g. pharmacogenomics/pharmacogenetics and proteomics), as well as cell/tissue manipulation and cloning. The impact of modern biotechnological endeavour upon phar-

maceutical science is thus well established and is increasing with time.

Many technical issues pertaining to the discovery, development, manufacture, testing and regulation of biotech-based pharmaceutical products are unique to this product category. As such, modern pharmaceutical biotechnology has been largely driven by molecular/cell biologists, biochemists and biotechnologists, as opposed to pharmacists and chemists. Indeed this field, both at an academic and applied level, remains largely segregated into 'pharma' people and 'biotech' people.

In collaboration with the European Association of Pharma Biotechnology (<http://www.eapb.org>), *EJPB* now introduces a section dedicated to pharmaceutical biotechnology. In this section the journal aims to publish research and review papers concerned with any aspect of pharmaceutical biotechnology, including the discovery, development, characterization, production, purification, formulation and regulation of such substances. These include macromolecules (e.g. proteins and nucleic acids) as well as cell, tissue and viral-based systems of actual/potential pharmaceutical interest. Articles with a predominantly 'pharmaceutical' or 'biotechnological' focus are equally welcome.

With this initiative, *EJPB* aims to become a premier international journal in the field of pharmaceutical biotechnology and with your help we will achieve this.

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