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Editorial

The International imMunoGeneTics Database IMGT

This issue of *Developmental and Comparative Immunology* contains an article on IMGT, the international ImMunoGene Database: a high-quality information system for comparative immunogenetics and immunology. This marks the beginning of a new and important association between the journal and IMGT, the international ImMunoGeneTics database, and its creator, Professor Marie-Paule Lefranc, of the University of Montpellier. Professor Lefranc is joining our Editorial Advisory Board, and will also contribute to the journal in other very important ways.

This association reflects the commitment of the editors to goals that are shared with IMGT—the establishment of an accepted standard nomenclature and numbering system for immunoglobulins, T cell receptors, and other molecules of immunological relevance, regardless of species. The establishment of an accepted 'gene ontology' in evolutionary immunobiology is particularly important for Developmental and Comparative Immunology and the community that it serves. Unless there is general agreement on the identity, name and properties of a gene or protein, regardless of the species in which it is studied, communication within the field becomes difficult if not impossible while the time-honored and exceptionally valuable system of nomenclature and numbering for molecules of immunological interest originally introduced by Kabat [1] has been the traditional 'gold standard' used by immunologists, the newer database and gene ontology developed at IMGT has many advantages and has been accepted by the Human Genome Organization (HUGO) Nomenclature Committee as their standard. The applicability of the IMGT system to all vertebrate species leads the editors to recommend (but not require) that authors use the IMGT numbering system, where applicable, in studies submitted to Developmental and Comparative Immunology. This system is described at http://imgt.cines.fr and in several publications [2–5].

In addition to original articles dealing with the analysis of sequences of immunological relevance, the editors are very pleased that the IMGT group will publish, in Developmental and Comparative Immunology, future articles in the series 'IMGT Locus in Focus', which examines in detail selected loci of special immunological interest. We believe that the readership of the journal will enjoy, and find very useful, the IMGT Locus in Focus series.

We look forward to a long and stimulating relationship between Developmental and Comparative Immunology, Professor Marie-Paule Lefranc, and IMGT.

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