EDITORIAL

As many of you will know *Biomarkers* recently gained a listing in Current Contents. This is excellent news especially for all authors as their papers will now enjoy much wider exposure. The speed with which we have achieved this is very satisfying as it reflects the fact that the journal has already made a favourable impression and fulfilled a number of criteria.

Biomarkers aims to publish high quality papers concerned with the development and use of biomarkers of exposure, response and susceptibility in relation to xenobiotic chemicals. Sometimes studies with biomarkers in any of these categories may yield negative data and the hypothesis is not proven. This is as T. H. Huxley put it … 'the great tragedy of science, a beautiful hypothesis slain by an ugly fact'.

However such information is often useful and indeed may be vital for other research workers in the field. Sometimes negative results are more important in science than positive ones. At the very least, knowledge of such data will reduce the likelihood of needless repetition of experiments. For example, a study investigating the relationship between a genetic polymorphism and a particular cancer in workers exposed to a chemical may show no relationship. However this is important information despite the fact that it is a negative finding, both mechanistically and from the point of view of risk assessment. The absence of a correlation or a response may lead researchers to new hypotheses and new and successful lines of enquiry. Knowledge of the deficiencies in an analytical method may save research workers time and resources and lead to alternatives being devised. Similarly, if a biomarker of response fails to detect an effect following an exposure then other researchers need to know that the marker may be flawed or insensitive. Unfortunately it may be difficult to get such negative data published in some journals in just the same way that newspapers and other media often seem only to publish bad or sensational news. As a matter of editorial policy *Biomarkers* will publish papers in which the data are negative. This is of course on condition that the study was initiated by a sound hypothesis, was well conducted and the data are deemed to be of sufficient interest to the readership as well as being within the scope of the journal.

Editor

1354–750X/97 $12·00