

Editorial policy in a period of rapid evolution of NMR with biological macromolecules

At the start of 1997 and Volume 9 of our Journal, I would like to present here some thoughts about the present state and the future of the *Journal of Biomolecular NMR*. During the past two years it was encouraging to see a steadily increasing flow of manuscript submissions, with most of the manuscripts representing the desired high technical quality. Yet the notion of 'high technical quality' provokes a first change in editorial policy: technical achievements that would have represented breakthroughs only a few years ago are today mainly of interest as a platform for work on biologically interesting problems. This applies in particular to sequence-specific resonance assignments.

To keep pace with the development of our field, we shall deal with this situation by introducing two-page *Assignment Notes* as a new category of publications, which will serve to announce that sequence-specific assignments have been obtained for a new protein. Normally, the minimal requirement for a *Note* is that it reports complete assignments for the polypeptide backbone. We will continue to publish more detailed descriptions of resonance assignments if they are part of papers describing a complete three-dimensional structure determination, research based on the use of NMR assignments (possibly

in combination with a crystal structure) for studies of ligand binding or other functional aspects of the macromolecular system, or if novel, original methods have been used to obtain the resonance assignments. A simple mention of potential applications, or of variations relative to a closely homologous compound will not be sufficient to warrant this more detailed form of publication.

A second change in editorial policy responds to increasing frustration among scientists in our field which arises from the experience that chemical shift data deposited in the currently available databanks are at best very difficult to retrieve. In response to this situation, we will resume inclusion of complete chemical shift tables in those papers that describe new, complete, three-dimensional structure determinations.

The ideas described here evolved during a recent meeting of the Editors of the Journal. In the interest of providing continued excellence in serving the scientific community, we plan to adhere quite strictly to the presently outlined modifications of the guidelines for future evaluation of manuscripts.

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