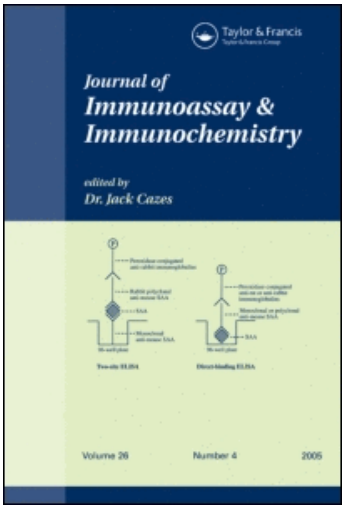

Journal of Immunoassay and Immunochemistry
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713597271

Editorial

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To cite this Article Walker, W. H. C.(1980) 'Editorial', Journal of Immunoassay and Immunochemistry, 1: 1, v
To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/01971528008055771
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01971528008055771

JOURNAL OF IMMUNOASSAY, 1(1), v (1980)

EDITORIAL

The concept of radioimmunoassay now embraces non-isotopic tracers and cell-receptor binders. It is frequently neither radio nor immuno. Homogeneous enzyme immunoassays amplify response with no need to separate bound and free. Cell membrane receptors in vivo act as non-equilibrium homogeneous enzymatic assay systems whose responses may be measured at cell, tissue or whole animal levels in cytochemical assays and bioassays. In all their rich diversity, these assays retain the original concept of ligand-binder interaction monitored by a tracer associated with either ligand or binder, and it is this concept that defines the compass of the Journal of Immunoassay.

Specificity eludes us; each advance reveals fresh challenge. Receptors react with drugs quite different from their target ligands; biological and immunological reactivities differ; even monoclonal antibodies may be expected to recognize configurations shared by different molecules. Data reduction and interpretation continues to offer challenge. The Scatchard Plot at its best yields insights into binding constants; at its worst, used with unworthy data, it can deliver binding parameters when no binding exists. The elegant versatility of the 4-parameter plot accomodates data from all manner of assays and a wide range of biological systems. The resolution of theoretical and experimental problems with as much rigour as biological systems allow will be the substance of the Journal of Immunoassay.

Developments in techniques and the range of application of immunoassays are rapidly growing. Experiences in one area frequently provide insights into problems in others and it is hoped that the Journal of Immunoassay will provide some common ground between the increasingly diverse disciplines that use these assays.

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