

# Organic Process Research & Development

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## Editorial

### Small Pharmaceutical Companies

During my consultancies and at conferences, I meet many scientists from small pharmaceutical companies, and I am impressed with the quality of the work and the speed of development of projects achieved in a small but focused operation. Many of these companies are from what is usually referred to as the “biotech” sector, a term I dislike. I prefer to call them emerging pharmaceutical companies or, if they have no chemists at all, virtual pharmaceutical companies. In Europe there are also some small, privately owned pharmaceutical companies which have been in existence for decades and which have products on the market for niche applications.

There are hundreds, possibly thousands, of these small companies around the world, and the number of them is increasing. Many have only discovery chemistry with no process R&D, and this means that much of the process chemistry has to be contracted out to an outsource partner. Excellent process R&D is carried out in these collaborative partnerships, but very little is written up for publication or is presented at scientific meetings.

OPRD papers are predominantly from the larger multinational pharmaceutical companies, with only a few from emerging pharmaceuticals. Many of the outsource partners for small pharma would be very willing to write up the work that they do, since this would emphasise in print the quality of the work that they have carried out. The problem often is that the small pharma companies seem reluctant to publish, even when the project has been terminated.

This editorial is really a request for the smaller companies in collaboration with their process R&D outsource partners to write up their work for publication, and to show that excellent process chemistry and scale-up is not the prerogative of the larger multinationals. Publication is good for the prestige of the company and of the individual scientists, and is of great benefit to the outsource partner, too.

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In my previous editorial, I forgot to thank the guest editor, Ulf Tilstam, for his sterling work on the special issue on Novel Technologies. He not only helped to produce an excellent special issue, but he also regularly provides part of the Highlights for the Literature section each month. He is also an enthusiastic reviewer of papers. And all this on top of a demanding job at Lilly! My thanks go to Ulf for his contributions to the journal, and for his support over many years.

Trevor Laird

*Editor*

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