

## Editorial

# The Many Faces of Pharmaceutical Research

With a new Editor-in-Chief at the helm, *Pharmaceutical Research* reasserts its commitment to scientific excellence, as well as its ambition to offer pharmaceutical scientists worldwide a medium to publish their best research and a source of knowledge and inspiration they will eagerly await month after month. To achieve this mission and these objectives, the Editor-in-Chief is now helped by a new team of dedicated Associate Editors and by two faithful Regional Editors, not to mention a rejuvenated Editorial Board.

Earlier this year, the Editors met to redefine the scope and editorial policy of *Pharmaceutical Research*. What the journal is not, and must not become, is a repository for repetitive work, observational studies, and confirmatory data, an occurrence vividly depicted by the philosopher Mary Midgley:

All academic departments are now bombarded with floods of incoming articles. . . . The main effect of this flood of paper . . . must therefore be to pile up articles which, once they are published, nobody reads at all (1).

A positive definition being always preferable to a negative one, the Editors have delineated the scope of *Pharmaceutical Research* and clearly established their objective as the publication of *mechanism-based, hypothesis-driven studies* fulfilling the criteria of *soundness, novelty, and quality*.

Such a definition raises the question of what is science and what is technology. I was privileged recently to find an answer to this question in an exquisite little book by the biologist Lewis Wolpert:

To put it briefly, science produces ideas whereas technology results in the production of usable objects (2).

This definition is pregnant and stimulating, but how does it apply to pharmacy in general and to *Pharmaceutical Research* in particular? It would indeed be tempting, as done

by some, to oppose pharmaceutical research and pharmaceutical technology, considering the former to generate ideas and the latter to produce useful objects. Such a Cartesian dichotomy is easy to grasp, intellectually pleasing, and wrong! The mission of pharmaceutical research is to create drugs and medicines. Fulfilling this mission implies the creation of knowledge *and* objects in an unending spiral of research—creating knowledge that creates objects that create knowledge that creates . . . .

This is what the Editors of *Pharmaceutical Research* are looking for, not the recipe for a better tablet or an improved calibration curve, but studies that answer meaningful questions and raise new ones as seeds for deeper ideas and better objects. In other words, *Pharmaceutical Research* is and shall remain a source not only of information, but also and mainly of knowledge. The difference between the two is an essential one:

When knowledge is . . . equated with information, understanding is pushed into the background and the notion of wisdom is quite forgotten (1).

By making this statement their motto, the Editors know how to serve best the community of pharmaceutical scientists.

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## REFERENCES

1. Midgley M. (1991). *Wisdom, Information and Wonder*. Routledge, London, pp. 6–7 and 45.
2. Wolpert L. (1993). *The Unnatural Nature of Science*, Faber and Faber, London, p. 25.