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Journal Interviews : 2008 : 2008 Dec. - Chemistry & Biodiversity

JOURNAL INTERVIEWS - 2008

December 2008



Chemistry & Biodiversity

A Featured Journal from *Essential Science Indicators*SM

According to a recent analysis of *Essential Science Indicators*SM from Thomson Reuters data, the journal *Chemistry & Biodiversity* has had the greatest percent **increase** in total citations among journals in the field of *Environment & Ecology*. The journal's current record in this field included 747 papers cited a total of 2,033 times between January 1, 1998 and August 31, 2008.

Founded in 2003, *Chemistry & Biodiversity* is published by Verlag Helvetica Chimica Acta, a subsidiary of Wiley-VCH. The journal aims to cover "all research fields straddling the border between the chemical and biological sciences, with the ultimate goal of broadening our understanding of how nature works at a molecular level."

In the interview below, ScienceWatch.com talks with Chemistry & Biodiversity's Editor in Chief, Dr. Volkan Kisakürek, and Senior Editor, Professor Bernard Testa, about the journal's citation achievements.

SW: Did you expect *Chemistry & Biodiversity* to become highly cited, or is this surprising to you?

Frankly, we have been hoping for a fair and rewarding impact but saw the uncertainty of such an expectation. The surprise is not so much in the fact, per se, than in its rather early occurrence.

SW: Would you give us a brief history of the journal?

Chemistry & Biodiversity (CB) was grown as a "spin-off" of the *Helvetica Chimica Acta* (HCA), a monthly journal covering all aspects of chemistry. HCA is a more than 90-year-old monthly periodical published by Verlag Helvetica Chimica Acta, a publishing house originally owned by the Swiss Chemical Society and now a subsidiary of Wiley-VCH. Following a strong increase in the number of papers dedicated to natural product chemistry and biochemistry, Dr. Volkan Kisakürek (Editor-in-chief of HCA) and Prof. Bernard Testa developed the concept behind CB, as best summarized by its motto ("Chemistry Probing Nature"). The journal has now achieved its fifth year of publication.

"Evolutionary factors are all-important in how organisms and ecosystems react to challenges; their significance in environmental sciences can

SW: How would you account for the high citation rate of *Chemistry & Biodiversity*? What historical factors have contributed to the success of *Chemistry & Biodiversity*? What, in your view, is this journal's main

In our view, the success and resulting impact of CB arise from a unique profile blending, a) multidisciplinary, and, b) focus on nature at the molecular/macromolecular levels. For example, natural product chemistry is of great current interest, if only because of the treasures of chemical architecture and medicinal wonders that await discovery in microorganisms, plants, animals, and ecosystems.

But scientific quality is not the only criterion of publication in CB. Insisting on multidisciplinary means, for example, a) reporting pharmacological or toxicological effects of novel natural products, b) assessing similarities and differences in the metabolism of foreign compounds (xenobiotics) in eukaryotes and prokaryotes, c) investigating the effect of environmental conditions on phenotype and chemotype diversity, and d) relating molecular and macroscopic responses of ecosystems to pollution challenges.

SW: Have there been specific developments in the fields served by *Chemistry & Biodiversity* that may have contributed?

"...natural product chemistry is of great current interest, if only because of the treasures of chemical architecture and medicinal wonders that await discovery in microorganisms, plants, animals, and ecosystems."

The impact of industrial pollution (involving, e.g., chemicals or radioactivity) on ecosystems and organisms therein may have been a contributing development. Another appears to be an ever-growing interest in natural products endowed with significant medicinal effects such as antitumor or immunomodulating activities.

SW: How do you see your field(s) evolving in the next few years?

Environmental issues will increasingly be investigated simultaneously at the molecular and systems levels to gain robust integrated understanding. Evolutionary factors are all-important in how organisms and ecosystems react to challenges; their significance in environmental sciences can only grow. The impact of the co-evolution of organisms on their biochemistry should also attract more research.

SW: What role do you see for your journal?

Ours is a journal focusing on multiple aspects of biodiversity. We shall seek to increase its contribution in the fields of computational biosimulations and evolutionary aspects. But above all, CB should establish itself as a front-line protector of biomolecular diversity against current perils. ■

Chemistry & Biodiversity

Dr. Volkan Kisakürek, Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Bernard Testa, Senior Editor

Verlag Helvetica Chimica Acta, publishers

***Chemistry & Biodiversity's* current most-cited paper in *Essential Science Indicators*, with 213 cites:**

Seebach D, Beck AK, Bierbaum DJ, "The world of beta- and gamma-peptides comprised of homologated proteinogenic amino acids and other components," *Chem. Biodivers.* 1(8): 1111-1239, 2004. Source: *Essential Science Indicators* from Thomson Reuters.

Keywords: natural product chemistry, biochemistry, biodiversity, multidisciplinary journal, environmental conditions, chemotype diversity, ecosystems, pollution, evolutionary factors.



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