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published in**

Williams, M.J., Rottner, K.
Introduction to Small GTPases
(2010) Small GTPases, 1 (1), p. 1.

Introduction to *Small GTPases*

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Small GTP-binding proteins (also known as small GTPases) are essential for multiple cellular processes such as cell proliferation (Ras), dynamics of the cytoskeleton (Rho and Rop), membrane trafficking (Arf and Rab) and nucleo-cytoplasmic transport (Ran). They are known to be involved in numerous physiological processes including embryogenesis, establishment and/or maintenance of polarity, adhesion, migration and differentiation of numerous cell types. Given their pivotal role in cell physiology, as well as tissue and organ development, it is not surprising that small GTP-binding proteins are also involved in an amazing variety of pathological conditions. These include not only uncontrolled cell proliferation, metastasis or angiogenesis during tumor development, but also diseases ranging from inflammation and vascular diseases to mental retardation or various infections. For all these reasons, the small GTPase field is an intensive area of research.

Despite a growing interest in this field, a dedicated, central forum for sharing and discussing new information with a broad readership has not been available until now. The need for a journal specializing in small GTPase research occurred to us a couple of years ago. The idea of launching such a journal became feasible in 2009, when we approached Landes Bioscience with our initial concept. The project was met with enthusiasm by Ron Landes and in October 2009 he agreed to publish *Small GTPases*. Only ten months have passed since then, and we are now proud to release our first issue. The nervous tension of the last few months has been replaced by the positive response from our colleagues.

At this time, we would like to thank our fantastic Editorial Board for all of their hard work and positive input, especially Harry Mellor who has been exceptionally supportive. Their expertise, and continuing commitment, will ensure that *Small GTPases* will become a high-quality journal. It would not have been possible to start a new journal without the professional help provided by Landes Bioscience, and we are indebted to many people there, in particular Ron Landes, Kim Mitchell and Kathryn Saucedo, for their help and patience, as well as their excellent organization and on-the-spot decision making. We are amazed that Landes Bioscience has been able to launch a new journal within such a short period of time.

Finally, we would like to thank the contributing authors for their articles, which reflect their ingenuity and dedication. In order to establish and sustain a high-quality journal for a broad audience, we are crucially dependent on submissions of first-class manuscripts from the scientific community.

With these remarks, we would like to welcome our readership and invite them to explore *Small GTPases*. We hope you will find this, and future issues, a stimulating and thought-provoking read.

We also invite you, as a reader and potential future author for our pages, to share in our vision that *Small GTPases* will develop into an invaluable platform of scientific exchange for those studying the biology and regulation of small GTP-binding proteins.

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Submitted: 05/01/10; Revised: 05/04/10; Accepted: 05/05/10
Previously published online: www.landesbioscience.com/journals/smallgtpases/article/12245
DOI: 10.4161/sgtp.1.1.12245