Editorial

Theme: Landmark Publications in the Pharmaceutical Sciences: The Backstory
Editor: Ho-Leung Fung

Editorial: A New Series of Commentaries Entitled “Landmark Publications in the Pharmaceutical Sciences: The Backstory”

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I am sure that most of us have pondered, at one time or another during our scientific career, about the genesis of great scientific work. How were these seminal concepts and work conceived? Were there special challenges in carrying out such work? Were these publications well received initially by reviewers and colleagues? How have these publications influenced subsequent developments in the field? Did the authors of these landmark publications anticipate such influence?

In an attempt to answer some of these questions, the Journal is initiating a new series of commentaries, entitled “Landmark Publications in the Pharmaceutical Sciences: The Backstory.” We shall identify, over time, a number of papers which we judge to be of great importance to the pharmaceutical sciences, and we shall approach the original author(s) to provide us with their comments and reflections. When the original author(s) are not available, we shall attempt to seek help from colleagues who had intimate knowledge of such work to provide us with an upclose historical background and analysis. Except for a review for adherence to sound editorial practices, such commentaries will be published as submitted.

It is hoped that this series of papers will provide readers not only with insights concerning the major scientific discoveries in the pharmaceutical sciences, but also with memorable reading about the background of such scientific endeavor. By highlighting these “landmark publications,” we hope to provide our colleagues, particularly those who are new to our field, with a historical sense of our discipline’s critical scientific accomplishments, so that they may put current work in an appropriate perspective.

We recognize that the self-appointed task of identifying these “landmark publications” is fraught with subjectivity and possible bias. We shall be guided by citation analysis, but more importantly, by input from our esteemed colleagues. The order with which these essays are published does not suggest any order of

importance, either explicitly or implicitly. To stretch out our enjoyment in reading these essays, we will be making our requests to our distinguished colleagues over many months. So, if your favorite “landmark publication” has not appeared yet, please let us know; it is possible that such an essay is being planned.

The inaugural piece of this series of essays (1) is written by our distinguished colleague, Gerhard Levy, who commented on his seminal paper, published in 1960 in the New England Journal of Medicine, on the dissolution of aspirin products (2). The important concept that pharmaceutical products containing the same active ingredient may produce different therapeutic effects as a result of different rates of drug dissolution was first examined here. It is nothing short of amazing, at least to this writer, that such an elegant and impactful concept was established with such directness, with little sophistication in equipment and extensive collaboration among teams of interdisciplinary researchers, elements which we believe are necessary for major scientific advances today. I hope that readers will enjoy Dr. Levy’s reflections on this classic publication.

Ho-Leung Fung
Editor in Chief

REFERENCES

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