EDITORIAL FOREWORD

Phenomena and ... Phenomenins

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This is a very short Introduction-Motivation for a new series of reviews to be published in JCMM, starting with *this issue* (P. Kougias *et al.*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 3-10, 2005).

Why have a 'Phenomenin Review Series'?

A characteristic feature of the contemporary biomedical climate seems to be the "molecular euphoria". This feeling of well-thinking is due to the fact that, at the present time, molecular biology is so well established that it seems possible to understand biological phenomena fundamentally as molecular events. In other words, almost every phenomenon is either triggered or modulated by a factor, say the substance X, which (usually) is a protein¹. Thus, the molecule responsible for a given phenomenon should be (named) the corresponding "phenomenin". If someone looks at the phenomenon X, then he (she) has to find out the matching "**X-in**". Conversely, when we read in the title of a scientific biomedical paper the word "**stressin**"² we have to realize that the subject is probably linked to stress. To make short a possible too long story, I may confess that sometimes I enjoy playing seriously with Phenomena and ... Phenomenins.

It is tempting to speculate that if an X-in does exist, then a corresponding **anti-X-in** could exist too. The first in our 'Phenomenin Review Series' is: "Defensins...". If **defensin** exists, then, naturally, a counter-phenomenin, "**agressin**", could exist too. And, indeed, it exists!³.

¹ As a rule, 'Phenomenins' are peptides or proteins. However, there are some notable exceptions: cyclic nucleotides, NO, eicosanoids (in spite of the fact that the term prostaglandin looks like a phenomenin!), biogenic amines etc.

² *Stressin* is a human serum glycoprotein, significantly increased in sera of professional soldiers [a]; it may transmit stress effects from mother to the newborn [b].

[a] **Lauc G, Dabelic, Dumic J, Flogel M.** *Stressin* and natural killer cell activity in professional soldiers. *Ann N Y Acad Sci.* **851**:526-30, 1998.

[b] **Ugolev AM, Egorova VV, Shinder DA.** The possible mechanism of the transmission of stress effects from mother to progeny in mammals via the placenta and the milk (the *stressin* hypothesis) *Zh Evol Biokhim Fiziol.* **27**:259-60, 1991

³ **Kuimumdzhiev I.** Another product against avian *Pasteurella* infection; *agressin*-absorbent concentrated vaccine., *Izv. Mikrobiol. Inst. (Sofia)*. **5**:157-74, 1954.

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