

SCIENCE

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EDITORIAL

BioMedicine '96: A New Partnership

As announced on page 1312 of this issue, a new step in the evolution of a prestigious series of medical research meetings will take place in Washington, D.C., next May—BioMedicine '96: Medical Research from Bench to Bedside. *Science* is pleased to have become a co-host of this meeting, together with a distinguished confederation of medical research societies: the Association of American Physicians (AAP), the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), and the American Federation for Clinical Research (AFCR). These three societies share a tradition of leadership in academic medicine that is more than a century old, in which the honor of an invited presentation has been a mark of widely respected research achievements.

More than 80 years ago, ASCI was formed by young medical researchers dissatisfied with restricted opportunities for presenting their findings at the AAP meeting. ASCI limited membership to those whose research qualified them by age 45 and established an annual membership quota. Eventually, those unable to gain entry to ASCI formed the AFCR. Despite these circumstances, the spirit of common interest has motivated all three groups to meet annually during the same weekend. BioMedicine '96 will continue this tradition. Leading off a long weekend of science will be a program organized by the relatively youthful Molecular Medicine Society.

Before nonmedical researchers stop reading, they should consider the views of Harvey Sapolsky, writing in *Technology Review* for November/December 1995 (pages 36 to 42). Noting that U.S. governmental support of academic research is no longer motivated by fear of the Cold War nor by fear of economic domination by countries with greater industrial competitiveness, Sapolsky concludes that health research now provides the best impetus for continued strong investment in academic research. Health research has become a high-technology field, providing a range of treatments from noninvasive imaging of disease and injury to lithotripsy to fiber optic-guided microsurgery. Moreover, health research products and services and health care itself represent major sectors of the U.S. gross domestic product. Thus, a national commitment to emphasize health research and development will clearly stand to benefit physics, chemistry, and engineering, as well as the life sciences; and U.S.-based progress in a particular sector will also extend that sector's contributions to international trade.

The invitation to include *Science* in the partnership of research societies sponsoring BioMedicine '96 can be seen as an extension of a revitalization effort begun in 1994 [see J. C. Weissler, L. E. Rosenberg, J. A. Berzofsky, *Journal of Clinical Investigation* 93, 457 (1994)]. To avoid continued separation between basic medical researchers and those whose efforts are focused primarily on clinical care, as well as the potential divisiveness of continued specialization in clinical divisions, the leadership sought to return to their intellectual roots and combine highly sophisticated scientific investigations with an intellectual environment devoted to the delivery of improved care. Inherent in this focus is the recognition that advances in the understanding of disease and the prolongation of healthy productive lives pose a continued challenge to those who pursue the scientific quest, whatever their chosen starting point may be.

We at *Science* believe that we can assist in the success of this effort by alerting new participants to opportunities within the wide field of biomedical research. The call for abstracts for BioMedicine '96 provides an open competition for both oral and poster presentations, as well as an opportunity for young research trainees to apply for funding to support their attendance. Those who are open to examining the opportunities offered by the challenges of biomedical research will find this an exciting and educational event. Twelve theme symposia will cover multidisciplinary research topics that are intended to broaden awareness of research progress and to indicate entry points for future participation to nonphysician scientists. At this meeting, posters will not simply be up for review but will be discussed in workshops led by scientists active in related fields. We welcome our role in this new partnership.

Floyd E. Bloom