

Brief Interview with Dr. Michael R. Shurin (Editor)

Journal of Vaccines & Vaccination

1. How many years have you been practicing and/or performing research?

I have started my very first research project on opioid receptors in the brain when I was in medical school. And this was in 1982-1983. Since that time, I have got additional training in several basic and clinical research laboratories and from 1997 began to consider myself as an independent investigator with my own support. For years I avoided any clinical responsibilities being entirely focusing on my research project, but from 2000 I am an Associated Directors of the Clinical Immunopathology Division, responsible for immunodiagnostics for the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

2. What is the research topic you are working on now?

The main focus of my research is on the immunobiology of immune regulatory cells in the tumor microenvironment: I want to understand how malignant cells utilize immune cells for the benefit of tumor growth and progression. I hope that this knowledge will be useful for improving existing and designing new cancer vaccines.

3. What makes an article top quality?

The story. I appreciate papers that do not simply describe a new gene or protein or function, but explain how a new molecule or cell regulated a biological process or physiological/pathophysiological phenomenon. I enjoy papers that combine the genetic, cellular, tissue and in vivo levels to introduce a new finding or a new mechanism.

4. What are the qualities you look for in an article?

I review manuscript in the same way as I review grant proposal. An important and significant question, original hypothesis, multi-level confirmation of new results, correct statistical considerations, adequate data interpretation, and clear conclusions.

5. Do you have any research funding (NIH or other national funding) now?

Yes, I have and NIH award and a few smaller awards to support my research program.

6. When did you become an editor of OMICS Journal?

I believe in 2010.

7. What is your greatest career accomplishment?

Every time when I was able to reach something that I was sure is unreachable, I was surprised and happy. For instance, my first RO1, first organized International Conference, first edited book, full professorship. I think that my 'greatest' career accomplishment was the opportunity to use my research lab and available recourse and knowledge to help young scientists to confirm their interests in biomedical research, learn how to ask and answer questions, design experiments, write manuscripts and run a lab.

8. How does the research published percolate through to practitioners?

Quite slow. My experience shows that the private practitioners are very far from research publications and new therapies or procedures, unless some company representatives bring new staff to their offices. Academic physicians are at another pole and might utilize new findings sometimes without comprehensive examination. Both of them are right since both mode of action are dictated by their busy life.

9. What is the purpose of serving as an editor?

Somebody spends a lot of time and effort reviewing and publishing my manuscript; therefore, I have to help others as well.

10. Do you have any patents?

Yes. For instance, with my colleagues here at the University of Pittsburgh, we have designed and tested a new ointment for topical immunotherapy for melanoma. We have more ideas how to further improve its efficacy, but none of the national funding agencies we had tried, wanted to support this project. We probably can find some other organizations that might be interested in developing a non-invasive prophylactic and therapeutic approach for melanoma, but one should have a special mental talent of an entrepreneur. Unfortunately, this is not me...

11. Have you contributed any editorials or papers (any types) to OMICS Journals in the past two years?

Yes, I did. My last Editorial paper on Low-dose Chemomodulation and Cancer Vaccines was published at the beginning of this year.

12. Do you plan to contribute any editorials or papers to OMICS Journals in the next year?

Yes, I have a few ideas to discuss with our readers and I hope they would be helpful from the educational or research perspectives.

13. Do you have any trouble with OMICS Journals in the past?

No, I did not and hope would not have in the future.

14. Would you recommend OMICS to your friends or colleagues?

Of course, because it is easy to recommend. However, it is more difficult to convince, but I am doing this and will continue to do.

15. How do you differentiate Journal of Vaccines & Vaccination with other journals in the field?

This is a hard question since I cannot professionally compare all available journals publishing papers on different vaccines. I can say that personally I like Vaccines & Vaccination because it is easy to navigate and because of the quality of published articles.