

Ten years later...

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Abstract This year we're coming upon the tenth anniversary of our biannual International Workshop on the CCN family of genes. It was during our very first meeting that the International CCN Society was conceived. This editorial provides us with the opportunity to briefly review how the need for a CCN meeting emerged and evolved, following the discovery of CTGF, CYR61, and NOV, the three founding members of the CCN family of proteins that in humans are known as CCN1 (CTGF), CCN2 (CYR61), CCN3(NOV), CCN4(WISP1), CCN5 (WISP2) and CCN6 (WISP3).

With the dawning of 2009 and on behalf of the ICCNS executive committee, it gives me great pleasure to wish you a very happy and prosperous new year.

Ten years ago, our knowledge of CCN protein biology was expanding at a regular pace and promised to open new avenues for better understanding cell signaling in normal and pathological conditions. At that time, 71 publications quoting *ctgf* were indexed on PubMed, 55 quoting *cyr61*. At the same time, 12 manuscripts had been issued from my laboratory on CCN3/nov.

Considering the potential expansion of this field, it occurred to me that the whole field would benefit from workshops that would permit direct contact between actors in the field, should they be already established or new-

comers. Since my friend H. Yeger, to whom I submitted this idea, was very enthusiastic about it, I contacted Gary Grotendorst and Lester Lau who had discovered *ctgf* and *cyr61* respectively. Very rapidly they also agreed that it was indeed time for meeting—The fruit was ripe!

When I suggested organizing the first International Workshop on the CCN family of Genes in France, we had no idea of how many groups would attend the meeting. I must admit that without the support and help from my wife, Annick, the CCN meetings would not have been.

From the original Call for Communications that we posted on the Web until a few weeks before we had to close registration, we both spent a lot of energy raising funding, dealing with every single aspect of organizing a meeting—including selection of meals, wines, entertainment, renting meeting rooms, etc.—with not a single idea of how many attendees would respond.... A month before the meeting date, after booking the meeting rooms and having committed ourselves to the catering companies, we still had no clue as to the exact number of participants!

We pulled it off, and it was a successful first meeting, followed by two other great meetings that we organized at the same place.

At that time, Annick and I felt that we had “infused” the CCN meeting with the “family spirit” that had been a key factor for the success of this venue, and we both felt that it was time to move on and have the meetings held in other places around the world. With the organization of the 4th CCN meeting in Okayama, Japan, M. Takigawa showed that the spirit was alive and would carry over into future meetings.

Parallel to the establishment of the International Workshops on the CCN family of genes, there was a need for an organization that would permit the scientists in the CCN field to exchange ideas, share new techniques and results,

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discuss the organization of meetings, etc. The International CCN Society was born soon after setting up a CCN Steering Committee at the first CCN meeting in Saint-Malo.

Since then, I have done my best as the President of the ICCNS, with the help of many colleagues, to establish our Society as the reference for researchers in the CCN field.

The most recent moves to reinforce the strength and visibility of our Society consisted of launching the Journal of Cell Communication and Signaling and remodeling our ICCNS web site.

The Journal of Cell Communication and Signaling (JCCS) was created a little more than 1 year ago, replacing our previous electronic journal that I originally launched at BMC under the name of Cell Communication and Signaling. Due to BMC's particular approach to publishing which was not in line with our concept, the whole editorial board agreed to follow me in the new venture that P. Butler and I decided to run with Springer.

Having JCCS as the official journal of the ICCNS is a unique opportunity to promote our field. This year, we have actively worked to increase our contacts with other societies in fields which we believe have scientific interests that are overlapping with ours. Along the same line, we have had great support from Springer for the 2008 5th CCN meeting in Toronto, through the funding of scholarships and the creation of the ICCNS-Springer award.

The strong support of Springer should not make us forget that the credibility of our Journal and of our Society is very much dependent upon the quality of work that is produced and published in our media.

We can understand that sending a good original work for publication in a journal that has not yet shown an impact factor may be a difficult decision to make, in spite of the fact that JCCS is indexed on PubMed. The only way to get a good IF is to have good papers submitted on a regular basis. Obviously, this task cannot be achieved by only one or two. It requires the participation of a whole group of people sharing the willingness to reinforce the position of our field in biology. This year we expect to have several theme issues of great interest, and I wish to extend my deepest thanks to the colleagues who show us support and confidence.

In addition to JCCS, we have worked this year with Current Medicine Group Ltd-part of Springer Science+Business Media—to remodel the ICCNS web site. The web site is the window of our Society and we are proud of the very professional tool that we have now in hand. This is OUR collective site! Anyone is welcome to suggest modifications and alterations. We, as the managers of the site, are fully open to your feedback. Please don't hesitate to send us your comments and suggestions.

The ICCNS web site is tightly related to JCCS. In order to value the efforts of those contributors who write

comments, reviews, technical discussions, etc. we have decided that all scientific material published in the Newsletters and/or Nuts and Bolts sections of the ICCNS web site will be automatically sent to JCCS for publication after proper reviewing. In other words, those who spend time writing articles and comments for the ICCNS web site will be acknowledged by the publication of their manuscript in JCCS and instant indexation on PubMed.

Until now, the access to all sections of the ICCNS has been open to anyone.

Starting this year, access to sections reporting original scientific contributions will be restricted to members of ICCNS. For a modest fee, membership to ICCNS also provides several other significant advantages such as a free subscription to JCCS, the ability to sponsor scholarships and a significant rebate on CCN meeting fees.

We urge you to join us if you haven't yet. You are most welcome to step up to the plate and participate actively to the life of our Society.

Of course ICCNS and JCCS are very dependent upon your support, both financial and scientific. This year we are approaching 1,500 manuscripts indexed under "ctgf". A great number of the scientists who were involved in these publications don't even know about our Society and JCCS. It is our goal, as a whole, to make our organization known and to spread the word. The number of web pages pulled from a Google search run on CCN Proteins -3740- indicates that our field is expanding at a fast pace. However, we need to attract more colleagues in order to more efficiently share the information relevant to our topics of interest.

Great advances were reported at the last CCN meeting that was co-organized with H. Yeger in Toronto. The abstracts and report that are published in JCCS through the support of the ICCNS can be freely consulted. We do hope that it will help to draw the attention of other colleagues, but most importantly, your support is the key to our successful development.

Hoping that this year will see a significant increase in our membership and the number of manuscripts submitted to JCCS, I wish you again a very prosperous year.

February 12, 2009
Bernard Perbal
President ICCNS
Editor in Chief JCCS

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