

International Society for Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses and the new journal

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As acting Chairman of the International Society for Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses (ISIRV), I am delighted that Blackwell has undertaken to publish this new journal dedicated to the field of *Influenza and other respiratory viruses*. This is not only because Blackwell is an established international publisher of long and wide experience but because the subject matter of the journal is of such major importance to public health. I am also very pleased to announce that Alan Hampson has accepted the role of Editor of the Journal. Alan has had a long and distinguished career in the field of influenza and public health and is highly experienced in international collaboration regarding respiratory virology. He will be well supported by a strong editorial team with an impressive international flavour and a broad range of expertise at its fingertips. ISIRV wishes Blackwell, the journal and Alan Hampson and the editorial team, great success in this important new venture. In planning the new journal it has been agreed that ISIRV and Blackwell will work together closely to ensure that the journal meets our aspirations in relation to its high quality; relevance of its contents to the professional readership and international availability.

International Society for Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses is an independent, scientific professional society, established in 2005, whose mission is dedicated to promoting the prevention, detection, treatment of influenza and other respiratory virus infections and diseases and providing a strong advocacy for research. The field of influenza and respiratory viruses is an aspect of public health of major

international importance and impact. In the past 100 years pandemic influenza has struck several times, the pandemic of 1918 having had a huge impact causing some 30–50 million deaths worldwide. Recent epidemiological events including evidence of transmission of highly virulent influenza A (H5N1) viruses from poultry to man in several countries and a panzootic of infection with this virus in domestic poultry and wild birds have resulted in high levels of concern about the prospects for a future pandemic, triggered national and international pandemic preparedness programmes and emphasized an urgent need for increased international collaboration. But influenza is not the only virus of public health importance. The outbreak of SARS coronavirus was totally unexpected and associated with high mortality among those infected and caused considerable social and economic disruption. Other respiratory viruses such as the pneumoviruses, including respiratory syncytial virus, parainfluenza virus and rhinoviruses are of medical and clinical significance. The area of veterinary and animal virology should not be overlooked. We are increasingly aware of animal and avian sources of infection, for example in relation to influenza and SARS, and the field of zoonosis and veterinary virology is becoming greatly important. In particular, monitoring and control of virulent influenza in bird populations and surveillance of potentially zoonotic viruses in animal species are of growing relevance to public health. ISIRV will provide a major forum for the exchange of information and an advocate for research and public health measures in relation to respiratory viruses.

We will promote professional training and education and develop partnerships with governments, international agencies such as World Health Organization, OIE and others. We are also keen to develop collaboration with the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

International Society for Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses is the first international, professional scientific body dedicated to these activities and the new journal is seen by the society as making a key contribution to its mission and to respiratory virology in general. We intend that the journal will provide for an up-to-date communication of scientific information and comments relevant to the large number of scientists, clinicians and veterinarians in academia, public health authorities and government agencies and those in industries. It will publish up-to-date reports on research, science and technology, current epidemiological events and progress in diagnostic, treatment and preventive measures including vaccinology and antiviral drugs. A particular value of the journal and consistent with the publisher's strategy is that it will provide the reader with a broad cross-disciplinary insight into developments in the field as befits the needs of professions to be generally well informed. As part of ISIRV's agreement with Blackwell we are particularly pleased that the journal will be available free of charge to the registered and paid-up members of ISIRV and will also publish information on ISIRV meetings and other international activities.

ISIRV and Blackwell look forward to welcoming you to the readership of the new Journal.