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RNA Back to the Spotlight



As we deal now with our upended lives due to the coronavirus pandemic, it is almost unimaginable to recall scientific meetings of prior days. In particular, sharing a small classroom overlooking gorgeous Telluride surroundings, or hiking in peaceful mountains seem like worlds away from the quarantine life and shut down labs and streets that have been the life here for the past 100 days.

Yet our esteemed subject — RNA — and the modeling challenges it brings have never been more important as now, with Covid-19 on everyone's mind. As this special issue of the Journal of Structural Biology illustrates, challenges in RNA structure analysis, prediction, and design keep experimental and theoretical scientists engaged and inventive. The articles in this collection are an outcome of the Telluride Science Research Conference (TSRC) workshop on Challenges in RNA Modeling and Design started by Anna Pyle and me in 2014, and repeated every two years except this year. This is the third special issue that followed our meetings, with special issues appearing in the Journal of Molecular Biology in 2016 and in Biophysical Journal in 2017 (Pyle and Schlick,

2016; Schlick and Pyle, 2017).

These RNA challenges that we discuss in our workshops and in this special collection have produced many innovative multidisciplinary approaches to analyze, predict, simulate, and design RNA molecules. Large RNAs, such as the genome of the covid-19 virus, pose special challenges. We will undoubtedly witness more innovations in this connection in the near future. I look forward to discussing these developments in future in-person RNA meetings.

References

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