Molecular Therapy
Oncolytics
Editorial

Molecular Therapy Oncology: What's in a name?

In 2014, the American Society of Cell and Gene Therapy (ASGCT) launched a sibling journal to *Molecular Therapy* (MT), *Molecular Therapy - Oncolytics* (MTO), to accommodate the blossoming field of cancer biologics and publish studies that involved "engineering cells, viruses, or other microorganisms to combat cancer."[1] Similar to the other MT sibling journals, MTO was intended to be an outlet for cancer therapy papers that deserved to be published but were more specialized and needed a more targeted audience. Their timing was right on, as it was concurrent with the first FDA approval of an anti-PD-1 antibody, and the following year, we saw the first FDA approval of an oncolytic virus as a cancer therapy.[2] Another 2 years thereafter, the FDA approved an engineered cell therapy for leukemia.[3] Since then, checkpoint inhibitors have flourished, and cell therapies have exploded,[4] with six FDA-approved products so far and global markets estimated to reach $50 billion by 2030. Sadly, there has not yet been another oncolytic virus on the US market, though a few have received conditional approvals in other countries.[5] Encouragingly, there have been promising clinical data reported in small studies in certain settings,[6–8] giving us hope there is a future for oncolytic viruses. No bacterial therapies have yet been approved, but there are numerous ongoing trials.

Going by its title, MTO technically encompasses any therapy that destroys cancer (onco, from the Greek *onkos*, meaning lump or mass; lysis, from the Greek *lusis*, meaning breaking down). That said, in terms of everyday use, the term "oncolytics" is almost exclusively associated with oncolytic viruses and not really used to refer to any other type of therapeutic. The point was driven home to me as a newly minted editor-in-chief this year when a cell therapy author who had submitted a paper to MT refused to transfer it to MTO "because our study is not about oncolytic viruses."

Given all the exciting developments across a wide range of cancer therapy technologies in the decade since our launch, it is important we return to the original, broader vision of the ASGCT leadership and of the inaugural MTO editor-in-chief, Yuman Fong. To serve the field best, Dr. Fong emphasized that we need to publish "both basic and translational studies," including relevant negative data (e.g., "no dose-limiting toxicity"), aiming "for rapid publication of new knowledge to facilitate treatment and cure of human cancer."[1] Although it is only a switch of a few letters, we believe changing the journal name to *Molecular Therapy Oncology* will have a significant impact on the journal's success, on ASGCT, and on investigators by making it clear we welcome submissions from all disciplines related to cancer therapy. You can find a description of our new scope on the MT Family's Aims and Scope page.[9]

Furthermore, to provide expert management and review of a broader diversity of submissions, we plan to expand the expertise of our editorial board and our associate editors. Please check our website periodically for our call for volunteers to see the topic areas we seek to fill. It is an exciting time in cancer therapy, and with this journal rebranding, it is also an exciting time for *Molecular Therapy Oncology*.

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