



October, 2009

Dear Dr. Xu:

We are writing to encourage you to join a **Scientific Advisory Committee** to help develop and direct a web-based, International Society for Dendritic Cell and Vaccine Science.

At recent meetings, e.g., the 10th International Symposium on Dendritic Cells in Kobe, Japan, many felt a need for a society *“to bridge dendritic cell and vaccine science, and to share information and other resources to stimulate and facilitate these fields, especially for young scientists.”*

Modern immunology has great potential to have an impact on vaccine science. An obstacle, we think, is that vaccine and immune scientists are not working together sufficiently, and that young scientists need more training and stimulation to address these spheres together. A one-page Mission Statement to this effect is attached.

A principal function of the Society will be to use *all* membership dues for travel fellowships for young scientists, *including scientists from the developing world*, to meetings in the field, such as the International Symposium on Dendritic Cells, the next one being in Lugano on Sept 26-30, 2010, which will highlight vaccine science. Yet it has become increasingly difficult to fund travel for young people. We are certain the Society can help significantly to overcome this problem.

A second major function of the Society will be to provide exciting web-based access for members. Our website will have information on meetings, jobs, methods; lectures; viewpoints; valuable updates on the literature; and discounts for registration at meetings. *The website will be organized by young scientists across the globe.* It will enhance rather than compete with existing societies by providing web-based links between dendritic cell and vaccine science on a daily/weekly basis.

Could you consider serving on the first Scientific Advisory Committee to the Society for a three-year period? As an advisor, we would appreciate your help along several lines: 1) make suggestions on the operation of the Society; 2) suggest donors including companies, governments, and other dendritic cell and vaccine societies who could help generate an endowment for the society; 3) make a one-time personal donation if possible. Numbers 2 and 3 will help raise an endowment to meet modest operation costs and allow all membership dues to be used for travel awards. Membership and donations can be made as summarized on the attached page. Once the website is constructed, it will be possible for members from around the world to join and pay by credit card.

Thank you for considering to join the Scientific Advisory Committee of the International Society for Dendritic Cell and Vaccine Science and to help launch a stimulating new society.

With best regards,

Ralph Steinman, MD
Henry G. Kunkel Professor and Senior Physician
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For the Executive Committee

International Society for Dendritic Cell and Vaccine Science: Mission

Vaccines are among the greatest inventions in medicine. Early forms were developed in China and India, even by 200 B.C., when powdered scabs from people infected with smallpox were injected to protect against disease. The word vaccination was first used by Edward Jenner in 1796 for injections of a smallpox vaccine derived from cows (Latin *vacca*, cow). Louis Pasteur generalized the concept by establishing the germ theory of disease. He discovered that animals and people could be protected long term against disease following exposure to harmless or attenuated versions of a microbe. Pasteur's attenuated vaccine invention, e.g., for rabies in 1885, was followed by the discovery of antibodies by von Behring, Kitasato and Ehrlich in the 1890's. Since then, dozens of vaccines have been developed, preventing many infectious diseases. *However, mankind faces an increasing challenge with new infections and a huge toll of older ones. Moreover, vaccines have not been exploiting T cell immunity and have yet to be developed in other settings, to prevent and treat cancer, allergy and chronic inflammation.*

Scientists have made amazing progress to understand the workings of the immune system, from the concept of humoral and cellular immunity, to the cellular and molecular mechanisms that regulate these adaptive responses. Now Metchnikoff's innate immune system has been unraveled with elegant advances on pattern recognition receptors and cytokines. Vaccines rely on all of these to induce protection. In addition, dendritic cells have been illuminated by laboratories around the globe. This cell type is strategically situated and endowed to initiate immunity and to control its quantity and quality. Dendritic cell biology helps to reveal how vaccines work and how immune systems can be controlled to make new vaccines, even to silence or tolerize immunity. *Nonetheless, the impact of modern immunology to vaccine development remains limited.*

Why? Although the invention and development of vaccines gave birth to immunology a century ago, vaccine and immunology scientists do not work together enough. How many dendritic cell biologists are working on vaccine development? *How many meetings bring vaccine biologists and immunologists together to discuss vaccine development? How many journals actually promote the translation of immunology research into vaccine development?*

Based on the above perspectives and needs, and an increasing interest by young dendritic cell biologists in vaccine science, we propose to establish an International Society for Dendritic Cell and Vaccine Science *"to bridge dendritic cell and vaccine science, and to share information and other resources to stimulate and facilitate these fields, especially for young scientists."*

This will be a low-cost web-based society to 1) fund travel for young scientists to meetings, and 2) sustain a website that stimulates the interface between dendritic cell and vaccine science. Established scientists and organizations world wide will be invited to make suggestions about society organization and benefits, and to make a one-time contribution to ensure the modest costs for the web-based operation of the society in collaboration with the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*. Once launched, the annual membership will be for students and postdocs at a rate of 50 \$US in developed countries, half that in countries with discounted subscriptions to the *JEM* www.rupress.org/disconline, and free in developing nations www.rupress.org/freeaccess. *Membership will ensure access to a dynamic society website with valuable educational and informational materials, and meeting discounts. This web-based society is meant to add to already existing societies and generate much needed travel support and scientific stimulation for young scientists.*

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