Editorial

One of the most fundamental biological processes is the determination and subsequent differentiation of two sexes. This 'masterpiece of nature' – to borrow a phrase from Erasmus Darwin used in allusion to sexual reproduction – has proven most successful during millions of years of evolution, and has been modified into a variety of different mechanisms operating in the extant animal kingdom. Recent discoveries have led to impressive advances in our knowledge of the genetic and environmental factors that govern sex determination. Furthermore, experimental and clinical research has provided a wealth of information concerning disturbances of normal gonadal and sexual development caused by mutations or endocrine abnormalities. A major boost to the field was the identification, in 1990, of the mammalian testis-determining gene *SRY*. This discovery opened the door to unraveling the genetic network that controls early steps in sexual development. Subsequent work has identified many other genes involved in these processes in mammals, and shown that they perform similar functions in other, non-mammalian vertebrates as well. Nowadays, when an interesting new gene or novel pathway in sexual development has been identified in one species, this knowledge is rapidly applicable to the study of the related process in other species. This development is continuing at an ever increasing pace.

The editors of this new journal, like many of their colleagues, find it increasingly difficult to assimilate the amount of information that has been and will be generated in this rapidly advancing field, especially since the

flood of data is published in many diverse journals. We feel the need for a new journal where a considerable portion of the sound work going on in the field can be published, and where investigators with expertise in one particular organism can easily keep abreast of recent advances in other organisms. *Sexual Development* aspires to provide such a forum. It welcomes studies on the entire vertebrate spectrum and is also open for contributions on invertebrates, as the leoporello on its front cover illustrates. Its broad scope will cover all aspects of the genetics, molecular biology, embryology, endocrinology, evolution and pathology of sex determination and differentiation in humans and animals. This broad scope is already exemplified by the diversity of articles in the first issue.

Sexual Development will publish high-quality original research manuscripts, review articles, short reports, case reports and commentaries. It is managed by an internationally renowned and multidisciplinary editorial team of ten prominent scientists serving as section editors, supported by a distinguished panel of editorial board members. We are committed to ensuring fast and author-friendly editorial processing and peer reviewing. Contributions from the scientific community are invited to make *Sexual Development* a viable forum for basic and medical research on sex determination and differentiation.

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