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Viral Genes and the Host: Evolution in Action

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Message from the Guest Editors

Viruses are essentially transmissible RNA or DNA molecules acting as free-roaming genes that amplify in an organism before spreading to other individuals. Viruses rely heavily on host cells for their proliferation and, in the process, frequently derail cellular pathways to optimize virus production. Despite this intense virus-host interaction, the structure, expression and replication of viral genes sets them apart from cellular genes. Furthermore, viruses are extremely divergent and employ various propagation strategies, ranging from the transient infection of only a small subset of a susceptible host population to persistent infection with a close to 100% prevalence. And, surprisingly, we are partly descended from viruses: our chromosomes are riddled with the remains of retroviral infections of the past. If one has a closer look, other viruses have their genes inserted into host chromosomes as well. Of course, the addition of viral genetic elements has not been without effect. Together, the fascinating aspects of a completely different world of genes are the topic of a Special Issue of *Genes*: “Viral Genes and the Host: Evolution in Action”.



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Special Issue



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Genes is central to our understanding of biology, and modern advances such as genomics and genome editing have maintained genetics as a vibrant, diverse and fast-moving field. There is a need for good quality, open access journals in this area, and the *Genes* team aims to provide expert manuscript handling, serious peer review, and rapid publication across the whole discipline of genetics. Starting in 2010, the journal is now well established and recognised. Why not consider *Genes* for your next genetics paper?

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