

EDITORIAL

New Editor on Journal of Cell Science

Michael Way (Editor-in-Chief)

As someone who has worked on things related to the actin cytoskeleton my whole research career, the nucleus was not something I paid much attention to. Yes, there were scattered historical reports of actin in the nucleus long before I started my PhD, but no one believed actin was really there of course – it was all an artefact of fixation, you know. Nuclear actin was taboo and no one talked about it at the meetings I went to as a student and postdoc. How wrong we were – today nuclear actin is alive and kicking, although there are definitely more questions than answers concerning what it is actually doing there. We now appreciate that the nucleus contains a wide assortment of proteins associated with the cytoplasmic actin cytoskeleton including myosin motors and actin nucleators such as the Arp2/3 complex. In addition, it should not be forgotten that many chromatin-associated complexes including SWI/SNF and INO80/SWR also contain multiple actin-related proteins, as well as actin itself. It strikes me that maybe we should all be paying more attention to the nucleus and not just because it contains my favourite proteins! Maybe that's why, in recent years, we've been seeing more submissions to JCS that are focused on different aspects of the nucleus and that traditionally appeared in journals with 'molecular' in their titles. It is for these reasons that we have decided to appoint a new Editor to cover this important area for the journal.

It is with great pleasure then, that I announce the appointment of Asifa Akhtar as an Editor on Journal of Cell Science. Originally from Pakistan, Asifa obtained her undergraduate degree in biology from University College London (UCL), UK. She remained in London to study the regulation of transcription initiation and elongation in Richard Treisman's laboratory at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (ICRF; now part of Cancer Research UK) in Lincoln's Inn Fields. She continued in the field of chromatin regulation as a postdoctoral fellow working on the control of gene dosage compensation by histone acetylation in *Drosophila* in Peter Becker's laboratory at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), Heidelberg and the Adolf-Butenandt Institute, Munich, Germany. In 2001, Asifa started her own independent research group in the gene expression programme at the EMBL where she continued her work investigating the chromatin and epigenetic mechanisms underlying X-chromosome gene regulation in *Drosophila*. In 2009, her laboratory moved to the Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology and Epigenetics, Freiburg, Germany. In 2013, she was appointed managing director at the Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology and Epigenetics, heading the department of chromatin regulation. Asifa is currently investigating how the dosage compensation complex, composed of RNA and proteins (the MSL complex), is targeted to the *Drosophila* X chromosome as well as how it modulates X chromosomal transcriptional output, from single cell resolution all the way to the chromosomal and organismal levels.



New Editor Asifa Akhtar.

Asifa has received many awards including both EMBO and Human Frontiers Science Program (HFSP) postdoctoral fellowships. In 2008, she received the early career award from the European Life Science Organization (ELSO) for her work on chromatin regulation and was elected an EMBO member in 2013. More recently, she has been honoured with the 2017 Feldberg Foundation Prize in recognition of her outstanding scientific achievements. Outside of the lab Asifa is very active in her field, serving as evaluator for many research and funding organizations (e.g. MPG, DFG, EU) as well as co-organizing international conferences on chromatin, epigenetics and transcription (e.g. EMBO and Keystone). She also serves as an editor for eLife and PLOS Genetics. We are very pleased to welcome Asifa to Journal of Cell Science and look forward to working with her.