Manuscript submission process

online submission process

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Online Submission

Spandios Publications journals utilize an online submission and tracking system designed to provide a faster, more efficient service to authors.

Submission guidelines

The principal aim of Spandios Publications is to publish promptly original works of high quality in English.

Manuscripts will be considered on the understanding that they report original work, or are review articles summarizing and interpreting progress in a thematic area and are not under consideration for publication by another journal.

Manuscripts should be written in clear, concise English and should contain all essential data in order to make the presentation clear and the results of the study replicable.

Authors who are not native speakers of English but would like to improve the English to ensure the meaning is clear can make use of the English Language Editing service offered by Spandios Publications by accessing the following link: http://www.spandios-publications.com/languageediting

All material submitted will be subject to review by appropriate referees selected by the Editorial Office and will be examined to detect inappropriate use of previously published material without attribution.
Spandios Publications utilizes iThenticate to screen submitted manuscripts against published studies and other relevant sources. iThenticate may also be utilized by authors to screen a manuscript prior to submission.

- The Editors reserve the right to improve the grammar and style of manuscripts.
- The corresponding author is responsible for the submission on behalf of all authors.

Prior to submitting your manuscript, please ensure that it has been prepared according to the guidelines below.

1. Submission method

Manuscripts may be submitted only by using the online submission system accessible via our website http://www.spandios-publications.com. Create a user account, log in and follow the onscreen directions.

2. Cover letter

Summarize briefly the important points of the submitted work including a brief description of the study to be submitted, that it is an original study presenting novel work, that it has not been previously submitted to or accepted by any other journal, that it has been approved by all authors, that Ethics approval and written informed consent have been obtained, and explain whether any author has a conflict of interest.

3. Format of articles and reviews

3.1 General style

- Use a single tab on the first line of each new paragraph.
- Do not use page breaks or multiple returns between sections (one section should directly follow the previous one on the page).
- Do not insert page numbers or line numbers
- Sub-titles and general headings should be presented in lower case letters (not capitals).
- Use British English or American English spellings throughout your manuscript, but not both.

3.2 Manuscripts

The first page should include:

- The title of the manuscript in sentence case. No abbreviations other than gene names or in common use.
- Full names and full postal addresses, but not including street names, of all authors should be provided and ORCID (http://orcid.org) if desired.
- Indicate affiliations of the authors by number (not symbols).
- Indicate equal contribution by asterisk.
- Name, full postal address, including street number and name, and e-mail address of the corresponding author(s).
- Abbreviations, if relevant.
- Key words (5 – 10).
- Running title (maximum 100 characters with spaces), including the first author's name. For example: PEARSON et al: REGULATION OF HER2 EXPRESSION BY NASCENT GROWTH FACTORS.
Manuscripts reporting experimental results must be divided into the following sections:

- **Abstract.** This section should have 150-300 words, be continuous (not structured) and without reference numbers. Abbreviations that appear once only, should be defined in full, unless a gene name. If abbreviations appear more than once, the definition should be provided once, and then subsequently used throughout the Abstract.
- **Introduction.** The information in this section should always be referenced.
- **Materials and methods**
  - This section should include sufficient technical information to allow the experiments to be repeated. This implies that a full description of all the experiments described in Results and presented in the Figures/Tables is expected in this section. For each experiment, all steps (e.g., DNA and protein extraction, quantification, cloning, PCR and microscopy) need to be mentioned, along with instruments the analyses were performed on, reagents and methods (e.g., BCA method for protein quantification, ΔΔCt method for qPCR), and relevant citations.
  - For steps performed with commercialized kits, provide the full name of the kit, along with the full name and location (city, province or state if USA/Canada, and country) of the supplier, and state whether the protocol of the manufacturer was followed or explain any modifications made to the standard protocol. For PCR reactions, provide name of the kit used, the 5'-3' sequence of the primers, final concentration of all reagents in the reaction, and cycling conditions. Carefully review your text to ensure that the type of PCR, quantitative or semi-quantitative, is clearly explained. If the PCR is performed using cDNA synthesized from RNA samples by reverse transcription (RT), make sure that all steps are described, and refer to the method as RT-PCR or, if quantitative, as RT-qPCR. In relative quantification, ΔΔCt is referred to as ΔΔCq. When using the ΔΔCq method, this must be referenced. One suitable reference is: Livak and Schmittgen: Analysis of relative gene expression data using real-time quantitative PCR and the 2-ΔΔCt method. Methods 25: 402-408, 2001.
  - Manufacturers/suppliers/software details need to be provided for all reagents used (including chemicals), instruments (e.g. thermal cyclers, microscopes) and software, ideally accompanied by the corresponding kit number/model/version. For antibodies, include the type (monoclonal/polyclonal), species in which they were raised and targeted species (e.g., mouse anti-human), explain any antigen retrieval steps, mention the dilution used, and state the catalogue number and supplier. For centrifugation steps, provide centrifugal force units in x g rather than revolutions per minute (rpm).
  - For bioinformatic analyses: state the software used along with the relevant citation, unless the software is not published, in which case a website link can be provided. For microarray/RNA sequences, data downloaded from GEO or other databases, this needs to be clarified in the text, along with the corresponding accession number of the dataset. The use of software should be described with regards to the parameters (default, study-specific) and the applied thresholds; please explicitly name the parameters, e.g. ‘association value’ or ‘false-positive rate’. For all software analysis of data from public databases, cite the database (along with date of access for databases as these are constantly updated), and species (e.g., human). If Figures/Tables contain data from a public database (e.g., Gene Ontology/KEGG), cite the source in the legend/title explicitly. For publically available sequences, provide the accession number.
  - The source of material used and relevant ethical framework for all experiments should be clearly identified (Ethics approval and/or written informed consent). For tissues, explain how these were collected, handled and stored, and where they were from. For bacterial strains or cells provide the name and supplier. For studies on humans, a minimum of information is required: number of subjects, age range, gender ratio, health status, matching between controls and disease patients with regards to the above parameters. Please note that ‘normal’ should be avoided for controls; rather, the precise health status needs to be described, e.g., ‘healthy’, or ‘individuals with no recorded tumor complication’. For manuscripts presenting studies on humans and animals see 3.9 below.
For statistical analyses: when statistical analyses have been performed, the following information should be provided: the name of the statistical test used, the n number for each analysis, the comparisons of interest, the alpha level and the actual P-value for each test. It should be clear which statistical test was used to generate every P-value. Error bars on graphs should be clearly labeled, and it should be stated whether the number following the ± sign is a standard deviation or a standard error. The word ‘significant’ should only be used when referring to statistically significant results, and should be accompanied by the relevant P-value. Significance indicators should be used on graphs and tables, and should be described in the figure or table legend with it clear which groups are being compared.

Please note that Figure legends are not expected to contain information already described in Materials and methods, except for image-specific information, for example, for microscopy, mention the type of image, e.g., fluorescence and the original magnification if scale bars are not used. Legends should provide information concerning what is shown in the figure(s)/figure parts. The x- and y-axes of the graphs must be clearly explained in the legends, and when p-values are provided to indicate probability, the comparison to which these p-values refer must be clearly stated.

All authors reporting research involving the use of cell lines must state the source of the cell lines. Authors are asked to check established cell lines with the list of known mis-identified cell lines available from the International Cell Line Authentication Committee http://iclac.org/databases/cross-contaminations to confirm that they are not mis-identified or contaminated.

Results
Discussion
Acknowledgements

If you use an English Language Service or paid for a medical writer to help prepare your manuscript you should explain this briefly.

References

Footnotes should not be used.

For Review articles:

Abstract. This section should have 150-300 words, be continuous (not structured) and without reference numbers.

May have different sections and sub-headings according to the subject matter.

The main headings of the review should be summarized as a numbered Contents section immediately following the Abstract.

3.3 Figures

Submission of figures to us implies that the images or parts thereof have not been published elsewhere (unless mentioned and or cited in the text and permission has been obtained and provided to us).

Images showing any patient or patient’s scans should not contain information that might identify them, unless you provide written permission from the patient allowing use of the specific image.

We accept that figures in our journals are rarely simple, and that certain adjustments are acceptable to help show experimental results clearly. The guiding principal when preparing digital artwork should be to ensure that the version submitted to us is an honest and accurate representation of the original observation(s) and will not lead to possible misinterpretation of what was done experimentally.

The Editors may assess submitted images for unacceptable manipulation using forensic tools and other means. This might delay progress of your manuscript and/or lead to further investigations and action to preserve the integrity of the scientific record, such as not accepting or revoking a manuscript. We may
request the original unmanipulated source files and may contact the author’s institution for assistance with enquiries to establish probity. Our guidance builds on that described by Rossner and Yamada (1).

- If brightness, contrast or colour balance is altered, the change should apply to the entire image shown and not a selected part. For images from gels or filters, ensure that details are not lost from bright areas or obscured in dark areas.
- No feature of a data image should be selectively enhanced, obscured, removed or added. If a composite image shows gels or blots with tracks from groups of samples analysed separately (or from different exposures) then make the grouping obvious using black or white lines and explain this in the figure legend. The boundaries of individual panels of a tiled image should be marked.
- In the Methods or individual Figure legends outline the changes you made to images and how. For example, “Figure 99. Light microscopy of a frozen section of a lesion stained with toluidine blue. Original magnification x 100. Uneven illumination was corrected using a control image as described (2)”.


3.3.1 File format

- Acceptable
  - TIFF without layers and preferably using Lempel–Ziv–Welch (LZW) compression as it does not reduce image quality.
  - JPEG (only if originally saved at the highest quality).
- Unacceptable
  - Images imported or copy pasted into Word or PowerPoint
  - BMP, GIF, PCT, PNG or low quality JPEG files originally saved at low quality.

3.3.2 Color mode

- Acceptable
  - Color figures: Use RGB as this will offer the best reproduction of your data, especially images of immunofluorescence, in the final PDF version of your article on screen. CMYK mode is also acceptable.
  - Black and white figures and line art: gray scale mode or RGB mode.
  - Combination figures with colour images and line art: RGB mode.
- PLEASE NOTE
  - Color figures are welcome but must be submitted only if reproduction in color is intended (a charge will apply).
  - There is a charge of Euro 390 per published color page containing color.
  - Changing color figures to black and white following evaluation is NOT possible.

3.3.3 Image size

- Image size is measured in centimeters or inches
- Create your figures at the size (width) at which they will be printed
  - 8.00 cm (3.15 in) wide for a single-column figure
  - 17.00 cm (6.70 in) maximum for a double-column (full page width) figure
  - Maximum height 20.00 cm (7.87 in)
Empty white space surrounding a figure should NOT be included when calculating image size. Images should therefore be cropped (cut) as close to the outside edges of the figure as possible.

- If a figure is too wide or contains too much information to be fit within 17 cm while keeping details clearly visible, figures must be divided into several clearly labeled separate parts.

3.3.4 Image resolution

- Image resolution in this context is simply a measure of the number of pixels per inch (also called dots per inch, dpi) defining the image and does not relate to the quality of an image in terms of focus, contrast and legibility.
- Images must be clear, of good contrast and legible at the size they are to appear in the journal.
- Images should be AT LEAST 300 dpi, at the size at which they will be printed (8 or 17 cm wide).
- Insufficient image size and/or resolution (dpi) will result in poor quality (blurred) printed figures if they are upscaled.

3.3.5 Exporting/capturing/saving figures
Figures may be produced by scanning, digital photography, or exporting from scientific software or a program such as PowerPoint.

- **Scanning**
  - Use a good quality scanner set to scan in RGB for colour images or Grey Scale for line art or to scan gel images, at a resolution of at least 300 dpi and with the output file type set preferably to TIFF, or JPG highest quality (lowest compression).

- **Digital photographs**
  - Set simple cameras to a ‘fine’ or ‘extra fine’ setting to help ensure that images have sufficient pixels.

- **Exporting**
  - When exporting from scientific graphing software, choose settings to ensure the highest possible final size and resolution with lines of sufficient thickness to be seen at final printed size.
  - When exporting from PowerPoint, DO NOT choose ‘Save as TIFF’ from the Save as dialogue box as this will NOT result in an image of sufficiently high resolution. Instead, save the individual slide image as a PDF (from the Print dialogue box), THEN open the PDF with image editing software, such as Photoshop or GIMP, and when prompted specify 300 dpi resolution. Finally, save the resulting image as a TIFF (with LZW compression).
  - Note: figures initially scanned, photographed or exported at an insufficient size and resolution cannot be improved by upscaling, i.e., artificially increasing the resolution of a low-quality figure. Using image-editing software to keep the figure size the same while raising the dpi will NOT improve its quality.

### 3.3.6 File size

- If saved according to our guidelines, files will rarely exceed 10 MB.
- To reduce the file size of images:
  - Ensure figures are the exact width and height they should be for publication (not smaller), make sure the figures are saved at no more than 300 dpi.
  - Ensure that Layers in the image have been flattened.
  - Save black and white figures as grey scale.
  - Ensure that TIFF are saved with LZW compression.
  - Consider saving files as highest quality JPEGs. These may be smaller files than TIFF with LZW compression, but will lose some detail.
  - Try using a compression or stuffing utility, such as WinZip or StuffIt.

### 3.3.7 Figure labels

- **Font size**
  - Labels must be sized in proportion to the image, sharp, and clearly legible.
  - When figures are prepared at the correct size (8 or 17 cm at 300 dpi) the Font size for labels should be 8-10 points.
  - If the figure is saved at a size larger than that needed for printing, the font size of labels must also be larger to maintain the correct proportions.
  - If labels cannot fit on an 8 cm-wide page unless the font size is smaller than 8 points, the figure must be prepared as a double column figure (14-17 cm wide). If labels cannot fit on the 17 cm-wide page unless the font size is smaller than 8 points, the figure must be split into several parts.

- **Font style and appearance**
  - Labels must be saved using standard fonts (Times New Roman, Times, Arial, Helvetica or Symbol font).
  - The labels should be of the same font and size in all figures. Also, the numbering should be of the same font and size in all figures.
  - Labels should be evenly spaced and aligned, easy to see (including exponential numbers around figure axes), and NOT faded, broken, or
distorted by JPG compression artifact. Do NOT use light grey color lines or labels.

- There must be strong contrast between labels and their background (e.g., labels placed over shaded bar graphs should be in a color that stands out against the shading, NOT blend in with it). Whenever possible, labels should be placed in black font on a white background. Consider using a black label with a white stroke applied to create contrast.
- Letters of labels must NOT be overlapping, condensed, expanded, have unnecessary gaps between them or be otherwise irregularly spaced, and must NOT be stretched (distorted) horizontally or vertically.
- Labels must NOT overlap or be concealed by other parts of the image, or be cropped (cut off) by the edge of the figure.

- **Label styles and language**
  - Labels must be prepared according to our in-house style, be phrased in accordance to the manuscript, and free of spelling and other language errors.
  - The first letter of each phrase, NOT each word, must be capitalized (e.g., ‘Overall survival (months)’ not ‘Overall Survival (Months)’ and not ‘overall survival (months)’).
  - Always use a leading zero (0) before decimal points: 0.5 NOT .5.
  - Decimal points must use a full stop/period (.) NOT a comma (,).
  - A space must be inserted before measurement units: 132 bp NOT 132bp, 5 mm NOT 5mm, 1 h NOT 1h.
  - Measurements must be written as:
    - second(s): sec
    - minute(s): min
- hour(s): h
- day(s): day(s)
- week(s): week(s)
- month(s): month(s)
- micro: μ, µ (available in Times and Helvetica) NOT u
- liter(s): l NOT L
- kilo Dalton: kDa NOT kD, Da, bp, kb
- 5 units BUT 5 U/ml
  - Greek letters must be inserted using the correct Greek symbol (using Times, Helvetica or Symbol font), NOT written in full, i.e., alpha: α; beta: β, ß, (available in Times and Helvetica); and gamma: γ, etc.

Figures may be divided into separate sections. Each section may be saved as a separate file (clearly indicated in file name) or included together in one file (with parts clearly labeled).
Separate parts of a figure should be labeled using just A, B, C, NOT 1A, 1B, 1C.

Figure sections may be divided and subdivided as follows:

- A, B, C
- A a,b,c; B a,b,c; C a,b,c
- A a-1, a-2, b-1, b-2; B, a-1, a-2, b-1, b-2

The number of the figure must NOT be included in the image, especially if placed on the overlapping part of the image. Instead, the file itself should be named using the figure number.

A, B, Cs must be placed to the top left of each section of the figure, NOT overlapping the image.

3.3.9 Figure appearance

- Figure backgrounds must be white. Grey backgrounds (or backgrounds of any other color) are NOT acceptable.
• White space surrounding figures should be cropped so that the image is as close to the edges of the page as possible.
• Figures and specific sections of figures should NOT be surrounded by borders (frames).
• Figures should NOT be stretched out of proportion (distorted) horizontally or vertically.
• Yellow must NOT be used for lines in diagrams. Any darker color may be used instead.
• Line art should be dark and lines and labeling thick enough to be clearly visible, even at small sizes.
• Charts, graphs and diagrams should NOT use more than 5 shades of gray. Patterns are acceptable.
• In charts, graphs and diagrams, unnecessary colors should be avoided (e.g., color that does not impart any additional information and is used for slight emphasis only, or color that can be replaced by shades of gray, patterns or shapes).

3.3.10 Copyright

• If a figure or table has been published previously (even if you were the author of the manuscript), copyright permission for re-use of the figure or table will often be required.
• You must acknowledge the original source and submit written permission from the copyright holder to reproduce the material where necessary.
• As an author of your manuscript, you are responsible for obtaining permissions to use material owned by others.

3.4 Figure legends

• Figure legends should be listed one after the other, as part of the text document and separate from the figure files.
• Figure legends must begin with a brief title for the whole figure and continue with a short description of each panel or part.
• All symbols (eg. asterisks, hashtags) used to indicate significant differences in the figures must be defined accordingly in the figure legend.
• All error bars must be defined in the figure legend.
• Legends should not contain any details of the methods.

3.5 Tables

• Each table should be submitted on a separate Word file
• Times New Roman. Font size 12. Spacing 1.5.
• Label using Roman numerals - Table I, Table II…
• Include a short title
• All symbols and abbreviations used, should be defined immediately below the table

3.6 Nomenclature and abbreviations

• Naming of chemicals should follow that given in Chemical Abstracts.
• Use standard abbreviations where possible. Use the generic name of any drug unless making claims about a specific brand or formulation.
• New abbreviations must be defined at first usage.

3.7 References

• Spandidos Publications has updated its services by incorporating Edifix, a new program that automatically links and corrects bibliographic references.
• Based on our particular style, the first 9 authors will be listed as they appear. When more than 10 authors are listed, Edifix will automatically include only the first 10 authors, followed by et al.
• Cite journal titles using NLM Title Abbreviation found in the U.S. National Library of Medicine Catalog online (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/).
• References must be numbered consecutively in the order mentioned.
• Do NOT use full stop after initials or abbreviations.
• In the text, cite references by number in parentheses e.g., (1-3) (1,2).
• Inclusive page numbers should be given.
• Following are examples of order and style, which should be strictly adhered to:
• Personal communications should be avoided.
• Manuscripts in preparation or submitted (but not yet accepted) and abstracts, may be cited in the text, but should NOT be included in the list of references.
• Non-English references should not be included in the Reference list. The entire manuscript cited must be in English.
• Output Style files are available to download in Endnote format from Spandidos Publications at www.spandidos-publications.com/pages/outputStyles or from Thomson Reuters at LINK and also in CSL 1.0.1 format from https://zotero.org/styles to work with software such as Mendeley (www.mendeley.com), Papers (www.papersapp.com) and Zotero (www.zotero.org).

3.8 Conflicts of interest and informed consent

Conflict of interest statement

Authors, reviewers and editors must declare whether there are any conflicts of interest with regard to the publication of a study. A conflict of interest exists when any of the aforementioned individuals have a competing interest in the form of a personal/financial association with other individuals or companies, such as reimbursement for salaries, equipment, or supplies, or a personal belief that may influence their objectivity and motivation, and consequently affect the data interpretation. This can include competing patents, grants, funding, employment, personal relationships and strong ethical beliefs, among other factors. Such conflicts must be declared, as they may affect the integrity or reliability of the science in the study, as well as that of otherwise unassociated studies in the same journal. Conflict of interest statements for public funding sources, including government agencies, charitable or academic institutions, need not be included. For example, if a charitable foundation sponsored the study and a pharmaceutical company provided the drugs, only the pharmaceutical company should be mentioned.

Full disclosure of the conflict of interest is to be made in the cover letter and manuscript at the time of submission, even if the author judges that it has not influenced the work. If no conflict exists, this must also be stated clearly. All authors should confirm its accuracy. Upon receipt of the statement, editors of the journal will decide whether or not to publish the study, and will include any relevant positive disclosures in the Acknowledgements section of the paper. Examples of conflict of interest statements include ‘The present study was supported by Jones Women's University, grant no. 12345’, ‘XY University provided a graduate scholarship to Dr Jones’, ‘The compound xyz was kindly provided by ABC Company, city, country’. Authors may be asked to confirm or update, or provide further details regarding such disclosure statements following acceptance of the manuscript. Further details regarding requirements for conflict of interest statements are provided in http://www.icmje.org.
Informed consent statement

For studies involving experimentation with human subjects or tissues, the manuscript should include a statement declaring that informed consent was obtained from the subjects for participation in the study or use of their tissue. Furthermore, in case reports or other studies in which case details, personal information or images are included that may enable an individual to be identified, the individual or a parent, guardian or next of kin must consent to its publication, and this consent should be declared in the manuscript. Authors should disclose to patients that personally identifiable material would be available via the Internet as well as in print after publication (http://www.icmje.org).

A document confirming that informed consent or authorization was obtained must also be provided prior to publication. This could comprise a signed and stamped form or statement from the ethics committee or head of the medical team at the institution conducting the study attesting that they have received and archived written patient consent. In order to protect patient identity, it is preferred that original consent forms signed by patients are not submitted, but are retained by the authors.

Publication without written consent may be considered if all identifying information is removed, public interest considerations outweigh the potential harm, it is impossible to obtain permission and a reasonable individual would be unlikely to object to publication.

3.9 Use of humans and experimental animals

Animal and human rights statement

Research that is performed on humans should follow international and national regulations in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/index.html, or any other relevant set of ethical principles. Patients have a right to privacy that should not be violated without informed consent. Identifying information, including names, initials, date of birth or hospital numbers, images or statements should not be included in the manuscript unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the patient (or parent or guardian) has provided written informed consent for publication. A statement must be included in the Materials and methods section of the manuscript declaring that the patient, or parent, guardian or next of kin provided written informed consent for the publication of any associated data and accompanying images. Another statement must also be included in the Materials and methods section of the manuscript declaring that approval for any experiments was obtained from the institutional ethics committee. This statement of approval must be supported with a signed statement from the committee.

With regard to the use of experimental animals, any research performed must follow internationally recognized guidelines on animal welfare, as well as local and national regulations, in accordance with the U.K. Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act and associated guidelines, the EU Directive 2010/63/EU for animal experiments, or the National Institutes of Health guide for the care and use of Laboratory animals. All animal studies should also comply with the ARRIVE guidelines, http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/arrive-guidelines, AVMA euthanasia guidelines 2013.pdf, and the AVMA euthanasia guidelines 2013. A statement must be included in the manuscript, identifying the institutional and/or licensing committee that has approved the experiments undertaken. Signed proof of this approval from the committee must also be provided. The ethics committee from which approval is obtained must be transparent in its functioning, independent of the researcher, the sponsor and any other unwarranted influence and duly qualified.

4. Proofs

• Authors must check their manuscript carefully before submission, after responding to peer-review, and when answering queries raised at the proof stage. Any errors will be faithfully transferred into the final PDF and print versions..
5. Reprints

- A reprint order form will accompany notification of acceptance of a manuscript and should be completed and returned immediately. For further information, please email contact@spandidos-publications.com

6. Article charges

After final acceptance of manuscripts, authors can choose between one of the two following options to cover for publications costs.

If your institute has a Gold Membership (www.spandidos-publications.com/pages/info_for_librarians) subscription with Spandidos Publications, then your article may be published free of charge.

Option 1: The publication charge is calculated based on the number of pages and color figures (per page) of the final accepted manuscript. All Spandidos Publications journals have the same fees for option 1.

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Articles become freely available 12 months after their publication online.

Authors requiring immediate open access of articles published in our other journals must use Option 2.

Option 2: A fixed charge is applied irrespective of the total number of pages or color figures. In addition, the articles are made immediately available as open access and appear online at PubMed, PubMed Central and Europe PMC. This option complies with a number of funding bodies (see open access section online).

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