

## Editorial

### To the Inclined Reader:

This volume of the Open Dermatology Journal features a number of articles on epidermal barrier function, originally planned as proceedings from the European Epidermal Barrier Research Network -E<sup>2</sup>BRN- 6th Annual Meeting, November 13&14, 2008, held at Boussens, France.

To the no cognoscenti these facts appear to be rather uneventful. Yet, the story behind the story mirrors in many ways the development of this journal: The steady increase in articles published in TODJ from 2007 to this year is similar to the development of E<sup>2</sup>BRN: founded at a local dermatology meeting in Hamburg, Germany in 2004, it quickly grew into a sizable annual meeting for European researchers interested in epidermal barrier-related topics. As spin-offs from these meetings several collaborative projects were begun, while most of the network, much like TODJ, remains virtual. As of the second year, the meetings were held as a satellite to the annual ESDR meetings, and in 2008, the ESDR being held as part of IID in Kyoto, the first independent meeting was organized in Europe. There are important and regular meetings in this field, such as Gordon Conferences and sessions at SID/IID; the contribution of E<sup>2</sup>BRN in this landscape aims at facilitating entry-level European interactions, with the special focus to provide a forum for junior researchers. Nevertheless, the critical mass only larger collaborative projects achieve is the ultimate goal for E<sup>2</sup>BRN. Only this will eventually secure funding within the EU-Framework Program, will acknowledge not only European contributions to this field, but above all will highlight the importance of this field of research as pivotal in prevention and improved treatment of high-cost skin diseases, through improvement of the understanding of epidermal barrier function.

Barrier research itself has undergone a remarkable development, leading from the static view of a mere plastic wrap to the multiple facets of an active and heavily regulated interface to the environment. Very aptly, the articles featured here illustrate the breadth of the current, ongoing epidermal barrier research in Europe, in scope, in technologies applied, and the involvement of both junior and senior authors.

Finally, this display of but a part of the ongoing activities at E<sup>2</sup>BRN also serves as an invitation to visit us virtually at <http://www.e2brn.net/>, to attend our annual meetings in person, and to collaborate and further epidermal barrier research at national, European, and international levels.

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