



Nome News Issue 3

Issue 3. November 2000

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The Committee

We now have two new editors: Dr Michael Lush and Dr Mathew Wright. Michael has experience of PERL programming and comes from a Genetics background; he will be dealing with the high throughput analysis generated by the large scale sequencing projects. Mathew will take on the more usual editorial duties of dealing with queries, maintaining webpages, assigning gene symbols etc. Mathew's specialist areas of ion channels, reproduction and neuroscience will be particularly useful for classification in these types of gene families.

Meetings

There were 25 participants at the nomenclature workshop, held prior to ASHG2000. This included representatives from industry, databases, lab-based researchers and journals. A report will be placed online shortly.

At ASHG we once again verified nomenclature usage for over 2000 posters. We are pleased to announce that approved gene symbols were used on about 60% of the relevant posters. We shall be contacting the authors of only 156 posters, via the ASHG committee, about inaccurate use of gene symbols, or to assign symbols to new genes.

The HGNC has also recently been represented by Dr Sue Povey in Shanghai at the 3rd HUGO Pacific meeting and the 4th Asia-Pacific Conference on Human Genetics. Human Gene Nomenclature Database: Genew3
Our database updates are now complete and being used to upload the online searchable text files. It was hoped to place the database online directly but this will not be possible in the near future. However, we are working to add new search terms to the online search engine and to display new fields including GDB IDs, Ref_Seq IDs and LocusLink IDs in the retrieved information. We have also added HGNC reference ID numbers to each gene record, facilitating database interoperability.

Journals

We work closely with a number of journals on pre-publication manuscripts to ensure the use of approved nomenclature; these include Genomics*, Nature Genetics*, The Annals of Human Genetics*, Human Mutation*, Mammalian Genome and Cytogenetics and Cell Genetics*. All those journals labelled with an asterix provide HGNC with complimentary subscriptions and we are pleased to announce that Nature Reviews Genetics have now agreed to do so as well. We are always keen to interact with journals directly providing them with a free and confidential nomenclature verification and assignment service.

ASHG-NW Summary Points

1. The definition of a gene was discussed and that used by HGNC verified for the present time.
2. Additional symbols will be approved for alternative transcripts in specific cases only and where the scientific community requires them eg CDKN2A
3. Symbols which include a designation for pseudogene will still be used, but not in cases where orthologs are functional eg ADAM1
4. Symbols such as C#orf# and FAM# will be used as temporary designations, until further structural or functional information is available.

Public Understanding of Science

Dr Mathew Wright is developing a series of new webpages to be hosted on the Nomenclature site. Initially, these will be aimed at answering the specific queries we receive at the nome email address.

Contact details

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If you would like to be added to our Nome News mailing list or if you have questions or comments on any human gene nomenclature issue, please email us at: hgnc@genenames.org