ESSAYS ON APS CLASSIC PAPERS

Introduction to the classic papers commemorating the APS Legacy Project

The American Physiological Society (APS) was founded in 1887 by a small group of visionary scientists and physicians. The Society has since grown to one of the most important and influential scientific organizations in the world. A major reason for this growth in size and influence is the publication of the APS journals. The first research journal published by the Society was the American Journal of Physiology (1898). This was followed by the Journal of Applied Physiology (1947) and the Journal of Neurophysiology (1938; acquired by the APS in 1962). The American Journal of Physiology was sectionialized in 1977 (now comprises seven journals), and the latest research journal, Physiological Genomics, was initiated in 1999.

Scientists now almost exclusively use online access to citations searches and to journal articles in their everyday life. The days of slogging through stacks of bound journals and wrestling with photocopiers are becoming a distant memory. It is likely that some of our younger colleagues have not experienced searching for articles in print in a library! A major challenge, however, is accessing articles published before the online collection starts. Even more challenging is identifying and finding articles published before 1966, the date that Medline starts. It is often humorously remarked that graduate students of today do not realize the manner in which science was done prior to 1966 and, more importantly, the significance of these early studies.

To increase awareness of and access to seminal papers in physiology, the APS Legacy Project was conceived and created. Over the past three years, the entire content of all the APS journals has been scanned into a searchable PDF format and deposited on the world wide web. Many of you have probably already seen the APS Legacy Content on the journals web site (http://www.the-aps.org/publications/legacy/). The completion of this project permits access to all journals web site (http://www.the-aps.org/publications/). The latest research journal, Am J Physiol Renal Physiol 287: F859 –F860, 2004.

The American Physiological Society recognizes the need to make accessible all the literature in its archives, not only as a testament to the dedicated scientists involved in physiological research, but also to provide a means to obtain a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage of modern day science. We hope you enjoy our choices.

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