

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 11, 2012:
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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE SCIENTIST LAUNCHES
JOURNAL FOCUSING ON MICROBIOME RESEARCH

*New Open Access Publication to Highlight Microbiome
Research in Humans and the Environment*

Baltimore, Md. — July 11, 2012. Two prominent microbial genome scientists have launched a new peer-reviewed publication focusing on microbiome research in environmental, agricultural, and biomedical areas. Jacques Ravel, Ph.D., from the University of Maryland School of Medicine's Institute for Genome Sciences and Eric Wommack, Ph.D., from the University of Delaware are the Editors-in-Chief of *Microbiome*, a BioMed Central (BMC) publication, which is scheduled for its first issue in the fall 2012.

The new publication reflects the growing importance of the need for studying microorganisms and their function in their natural environment – their microbiome - whether that environment is the human body, an environmental niche or any other habitat. “Microorganisms, by their omnipresence, impact the entire biosphere, including the human body.” explains Dr. Ravel, who is studying the effect of the human microbiome on women's health, and is part of the NIH-funded Human Microbiome Project (HMP).

The central purpose of *Microbiome* is to unite investigators conducting microbiome research in environmental, agricultural, and biomedical arenas. Topics broadly addressing the study of microbial communities, such as, microbial genomics surveys, bioinformatics, meta-omics approaches and community/host interaction mathematical modeling will be considered for publication.

“We have set rigorous standards in term of quality and availability of the data to guarantee that the studies we will be publishing are useful to other scientists,” says Dr. Ravel. The journal includes a new section, “*Microbiome Announcements*,” that will contain short reports describing microbiome datasets and their associated clinical or environmental data.

“We are working with experts in the field and are embracing genomics standards, such as those established by the Genomics Standards Consortium, which are very important to us,” explains Dr. Wommack.

Through this collection of literature, *Microbiome* hopes to integrate researchers with common scientific objectives across a broad cross-section of sub-disciplines within microbiome research.

“The studies of the human microbiome and the environment are characterizing key microbial interactions but appear to act independently from one another. We hope *Microbiome* will facilitate the conversation that leads to new insights,” says Dr. Ravel.

Jacques Ravel, Ph.D., is a professor of microbiology and immunology and associate director for genomics at the Institute for Genome Sciences (IGS) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. IGS scientists have pioneered studies in microbiome research and are continuing to be at the forefront of the human microbiome project. Dr. Wommack is a professor of environmental microbiology in the Departments of Plant and Soil Sciences, Biological Sciences, and the College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment at the University of Delaware.

“Our research scientists are world leaders in genomic science, and have consistently broken new ground in the field with their cutting edge research into the human genome and the microbiome,” says E. Albert Reece, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., vice president for medical affairs for the University of Maryland and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine. “It is fitting that Dr. Ravel – part of our world-class team of leading genomics scientists – should continue to innovate by founding this new publication dedicated to this emerging field of microbiome science.”

A prestigious international editorial review board will be working with *Microbiome*, including leading interdisciplinary scientists from the U.S., France, Australia, China and other countries, who represent academic centers, private and environmental research centers, as well as federal agencies.

Microbiome will be published online by BioMed Central, which is based in the UK. The website will also feature many online tools, such as RSS feeds, and robust advanced search capabilities. For more information: <http://www.microbiomejournal.com/>

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