

Special Issue on **Molecular Mechanisms in Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition (EMT) and Fibrosis**

CALL FOR PAPERS

Extracellular matrix (ECM) increased production and remodelling are integral aspects of the physiological response to acute or chronic inflammatory stimuli in many tissues, driving changes in resident cell phenotype, including the induction of the Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition (EMT) and fibrosis.

Induction of EMT/fibrosis requires a complex cellular reprogramming process involving epithelial, stromal, immune cells and has important implications on cell survival, plasticity, and migratory/invasive abilities.

In recent years, the roles of new extracellular mediators and new intracellular mechanisms in the modulation of EMT/fibrosis have been elucidated. In particular, the discovery of microRNA and, more recently, of long noncoding RNA (lincRNA) added new layers of regulation. Moreover, seminal studies have demonstrated that, in addition to biochemical extracellular signals, biomechanical cues may play a key role in the induction of cellular changes associated with these processes. However, despite mounting efforts in the field, the general mechanisms remain to be elucidated, and cell type specificities have yet to be fully characterized.

This special issue of this journal intends to focus on the molecular mechanisms driving cellular plasticity in response to inflammation and fibrosis, with a particular focus on the cell-ECM interface in different tissues.

A deeper knowledge of these mechanisms is relevant from both the basic and translational points of view, as it clarifies basic physiopathological processes (e.g., wound healing, organ fibrosis, and cell migration/invasion in tumoral and nontumoral conditions), and can be harnessed to develop regenerative medicine strategies and complex biomaterials to control EMT and fibrotic responses in specific and localized manners.

Potential topics include but are not limited to the following:

- ▶ New extracellular mediators
- ▶ New signalling pathways of EMT/fibrosis
- ▶ Role of noncoding RNA (miRNA, lincRNA)
- ▶ Role of the biomechanical environment (variations of substrate stiffness)
- ▶ Development of biomaterials to modulate EMT/fibrosis (scaffolds, delivery strategies, etc.)
- ▶ Biomarkers of EMT and fibrosis

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