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Contact: Sarah Pick (spick@som.umaryland.edu)
410-706-0866

GENOME SCIENTISTS LAUNCH JOURNAL
FOCUSING ON MICROBIOME RESEARCH

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

Baltimore, Md. — January 9, 2013. Two prominent microbiologists 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's College of Earth, Ocean and Environment are the Editors-in-Chief of *Microbiome*, a BioMed Central (BMC) publication, which launched its first issue this week.

The new publication reflects the growing importance of the need for studying communities of microorganisms – microbiomes – and their function in their natural environment whether that environment is the human body, the ocean, or any other habitat.

“Microbiology was once thought of as two exclusive subdisciplines – clinical microbiology and environmental microbiology – but the substantial technological advances, particularly over the past decade in DNA sequencing and analysis, have given scientists new common and interdisciplinary research interests,” 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).

“Microbiome will facilitate the cross-fertilization of ideas, research methods and analyses, and theory between clinical and environmental microbiologists exploring the emergent impacts of microbial communities on the ecosystems they inhabit,” says Dr. Wommack, a University of Delaware professor who researches the inner workings of microbial communities.

The central purpose of *Microbiome* is to unite investigators conducting research on microbial communities in environmental, agricultural, and biomedical arenas. Topics broadly addressing the

study of microbial communities, such as, meta-genomics surveys, bioinformatics, other ‘-omics’ approaches and surveys, and community/host interaction mathematical modeling will be covered.

The first issue of *Microbiome* features several innovative research papers from scientists at various institutions worldwide. For example, a team from the University of Guelph in Canada, summarized their novel stool substitute transplant therapy research. The team treated two patients with *Clostridium difficile* using a bacterial strain cocktail in an attempt to alleviate this difficult infection of the lower GI tract. Other innovative genomic research approaches are also featured in the first issue.

The journal includes a new section, “*Microbiome Announcements*,” that will contain short reports describing microbiome datasets and their associated clinical or environmental data.

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. Eric Wommack, Ph.D., 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.

A prestigious international editorial review board is 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. A number of present and former UD faculty are members of the editorial board, reflecting the leadership of the University of Delaware in community-scale microbiology research.

Microbiome is published online by BioMed Central, 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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