Guest Editorial

OMICS-Related Research in Latin America

THIS IS THE SECOND OMICS ISSUE HIGHLIGHTING omics-related research in Latin America. As with the first issue, Brazil's preeminent position in the region is reflected in its contribution of most of the papers. Nonetheless, our geographical scope is widened in this second issue to include two contributions from Mexico. A wide range of subject matter is again evident, but some trends may be highlighted. The first is the way in which the ground-breaking South American genome sequencing efforts of plant parasitic bacteria, including *Xylella* and *Xanthomonas* species, continue to provide abundant raw material for comparative genomic work that improves our understanding of bacterial genomic evolution. Two papers in this second issue from the University of São Paulo represent this trend. A second evident trend is a focus on regional issues. Thus, after a paper on *Trypanosoma vivax* ESTs in the first issue, a description of a search for new *Leishmania* virulence factors is presented here. Diseases caused by these and other trypanosomatids cause serious human and agricultural diseases in South America. At the same time, increasing attention is being given to exploring, organizing, and eventually exploiting the remarkable biodiversity present in many of the continent's ecosystems. Efforts such as the Tropical Biominer Project described in this issue may eventually contain the seeds of new treatments for trypanosomatid infections, as well as other diseases prevalent worldwide. Finally, this issue provides further evidence of the popularity of bioinformatics and theoretical genomics, areas in which minimal infrastructure is required to make significant progress. We hope that this second Latin American issue provides further proof of the diversity and vitality of omics-related research in the area and thereby stimulates further collaboration with other scientists worldwide.

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