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The places where biochemists go

by Heather Doran, University of Dundee

This issue dives deep (I couldn't resist) into the world of marine biotechnology and its associated biochemistry. I've always been fascinated by the undersea work of Professor Marcel Jaspars, and was thrilled when he agreed to write for this issue about his work in the discovery of new pharmaceuticals. It's not often you uncover a link between diving, chemistry, biology and tackling disease! I've been taught since school that 'we know less about what exists under the sea than we do about the surface of the Moon and Mars' and from the content we gathered for this issue that theory still seems to hold true today, particularly when you are looking at the molecular level.

This issue focuses on trying to understand what is in our oceans to give us more tools to use on land and also recognizing the importance of categorizing what exists in these diverse marine environments so we can better protect them.

This issue is important to me for another reason, as it relates to a personal story. On the first day of my PhD, I met a student at the induction session who told me they were going to be spending a good portion of their time at sea, in extreme environments at the earth's poles. I was incredibly jealous and never considered that work in biochemistry expanded beyond on-land lab environments. Surely only zoologists, marine biologists and ecologists got to venture outside? I was so very wrong with that assumption, and I hope this issue exposes you to different experiences and workplaces that biochemists inhabit for their work – they've even gone to space (if you don't know who Peggy Whitson is, take a moment to check out her bio at <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Peggy-Whitson>). I think *The Biochemist* has an important role to play in highlighting the diverse work of biochemists and all of the people involved in biochemical work.

Lastly, I want to give a shout out to the viruses. Much of our news and the content of *The Biochemist* over the past 18 months have been related to the COVID-19 pandemic but this issue allows us to explore viruses beyond their destructive nature. 'The potential of nature's unseen industrious heroes: marine viruses explain that, despite the devastating impact of some viruses, they play an incredibly important role in our living world, and they may offer promise in medicine and manufacturing. I think this is a really important area to highlight.

I urge you also to look at our student focus, outreach and Beginner's Guide sections that contain valuable information about navigating careers in biochemistry and might help you get to grips with a new technique.



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