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## New feature: pathways and important genes from PharmGKB

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In this issue of *Pharmacogenetics and Pharmacogenomics*, we are pleased to introduce a regular new feature, provided in collaboration with the Pharmacogenomics Knowledgebase (PharmGKB, <http://www.pharmgkb.org/>). Each issue of our journal will highlight two elements from the PharmGKB site. First, we will present an important pathway of drug metabolism (usually affecting the pharmacokinetics of a drug) or an important pathway of drug action (describing its targets and mechanism of action or pharmacodynamics). The PharmGKB has a staff of PhD and MS level biologists who constantly survey the literature and create these summaries for users of the database. In addition, members of the NIH-support Pharmacogenetics Research Network and others often coauthor those pathways that figure significantly in their own work. PharmGKB currently offers 57 such pathways, all provided with a downloadable graphic, an extended caption, a set of links into the database describing more about the genes and drugs, and an excel file with pertinent literature references. In each issue, we will feature one of these pathways and provide a useful summary of the significance and scientific understanding of these pathways, along with links back to the PharmGKB for more information. We hope that these summaries will serve both as a starting point for new scientists getting interest in pharmacogenomics, as well as a way for established researchers to expand their understanding of current challenges in the field.

Second, we will present detailed gene summaries for PharmGKB ‘Very Important Pharmacogenes’ (VIP genes) which are, in many ways, the field’s greatest hits – genes that have been shown to be important for modulating the response to one or more drugs, and whose variants have been shown to impact drug response phenotypes. The PharmGKB curators and/or collaborators (from Pharmacogenetics Research Network and elsewhere) create these summaries along with specific mention of important variants. The summaries not only provide a textual summary of the gene’s significance, but also provide extensive links to the literature, as well as lists of pertinent drugs, diseases, and side effects. At present, PharmGKB offers 39 VIP gene summaries. We hope these summaries will serve both as a tutorial and continuing education function for the field.

PharmGKB tracks its usage patterns carefully and the pathways and VIP gene summaries are two of the most popular features of the site. We are happy to collaborate in bringing them to the readership of the journal to increase their impact and utility, and encourage readers to learn more on the PharmGKB site. We understand that in rapidly changing field such as pharmacogenomics, knowledge can become outdated. For this reason, we encourage our readers to provide feedback and commentary about the presented information. Each of the pathway diagrams and VIP gene summaries are time stamped, and are rereviewed on a regular basis, however experts in the field may become aware of new developments sooner than our staff. Therefore, the PharmGKB curatorial staff would be happy to interact with the readership to improve these summaries in an ongoing manner, and we hope that they will continue to be an important resource for our discipline.