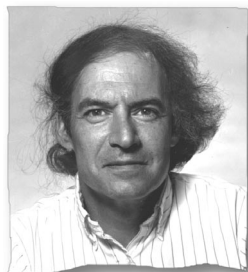


Meet our Editor

Dr Jonathan Van Blerkom



Born in Manhattan, New York City, Jonathan Van Blerkom was educated there at the City College, his interests including biology and biochemistry. Moving to the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder, he gained his PhD in 1974. Academic positions included Fellow of the European Molecular Biology Organization, Cambridge University, England in 1975. Returning to the USA and happily settling in Colorado as Lecturer in the Department of Pediatrics at the BF Stolinsky Laboratory, Denver, he later returned to the Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology Department at Boulder, becoming Senior Researcher and Faculty Fellow at the Institute of Behavioural Genetics and then Professor from 1986 until today. His early scientific work introducing two-dimensional protein analyses enabled him to calculate the onset and declining activities of specific proteins in developing oocytes, preimplantation embryos and fetal tissues of several species, including mice. Today, proteomics is an in-word complementing the genomics of the human genome project.

With the introduction of IVF, he also assumed various clinical activities, including Laboratory Director, Reproductive Genetics In Vitro, between 1982 and 1999, and from 1998 until now as Laboratory Director of the IVF Program, Colorado Reproductive Endocrinology in the Rose Medical Center, Denver. Now being able to study human material, his work began to attract clinical attention, especially as he began to analyse the early development of human oocytes and embryos until blastocyst implantation. He has maintained broad interests in molecular, cellular and genetic controls of development, working on such topics as chromosomal organization, embryo fragmentation, mitochondria, molecular and cellular polarities in oocytes and embryos, and intrafollicular factors that influence oocyte and embryo competence. More practical interests culminated in two US patents: (4,840,891), Polymeric Encapsulation of Sperm for Artificial Insemination, June 1989 and (RE 34,326), Polymeric Encapsulation, Storage and Programmed Delivery of Sperm for Artificial Insemination, June 1993.

He has fulfilled numerous professional activities and service. Membership of Editorial Boards have included *Electron Microscopy in Biology and Medicine*, 1979–1984, Associate Editor, *International Journal of Developmental Biology*,

1988–1993, Guest Editor, *Journal Electron Microscopic Technique*, 1989, Editorial Board, *Human Reproduction Update*, 1994–1996, Editorial Board, *Molecular Human Reproduction*, 1996–2001, Editorial Board, *Reproductive BioMedicine Online* from 2000 until the present time. He has also served as scientific advisor on numerous boards and organizations, including member then Chairman of the Board of Scientific Advisors, Genetic Engineering, Inc., Denver, 1981–1985, member of the National Institute of Medicine Committee on Medically Assisted Conception, 1987–1988, Board of Scientific Advisors, Progenitor, Inc. between 1993 and 1998 and Consulting Member of United States FDA Advisory Panels from 2002. He also is a member of numerous scientific boards for societies related to Assisted Reproduction.

He is a welcome and sought-after speaker in conferences seeking knowledge on detailed and advanced studies. Endless invitations constantly arrive on his desk to speak at academic institutions and societal meetings, beginning in the year following his gaining a PhD! Recent examples related to his work in humans include lectures in China and numerous presentations in North America and Europe. He gained great pleasure as Invited Speaker at the International Symposium on mitochondria in human embryos, held in Sydney Australia in 1999, Plenary Lecturer in the ESHRE Symposium on Human Embryogenesis, Antwerp, Belgium in 2000, and a return to ESHRE in 2001 as Invited Lecturer at the 17th Annual Meeting. Still enjoying travelling, he has maintained this pace until the present day. His career is marked by the publication of more than 100 distinguished scientific papers, beginning in 1973 when his first paper with C Manes and JC Daniel on the ultrastructure of the developing preimplantation rabbit embryo *in vivo and in vitro* was published in *Developmental Biology*. Major papers have appeared regularly since then, many quoted very often as he has led in applying electron microscopy, cellular biology and analyses on DNA, RNA and proteins to early mammalian development, including human preimplantation embryology. Some of his greatest scientific pleasure was gained in working with his long-time friend and collaborator, the late Pietro Motta, which began in 1975 and resulted in numerous publications on ovarian function and several books on the cellular biology of reproduction. His work with Dr Sayoko Makabe began with contributions to *The Biology of the Ovary*, and still continues with a forthcoming volume on human female reproductive function.

Jonathan is married to Cathy, a practising pathologist. Times are changing fast for their two children. Next year, Elizabeth enters college and Peter enters high school. His occasional wish for more free time clearly lies in a distant future. He enjoys returning to his former laboratory in Cambridge and meeting old friends there. When not writing, editing, thinking about experiments, or gazing down the microscope at eggs and embryos, he spends most of his time with his wife and children hiking, snowshoeing and chopping wood at their remote cabin high in the Colorado Rockies.