

Current Comments®

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The Most-Cited 1985 Life-Sciences Articles Highlight Signal Transduction, Atrial Natriuretic Factor, and AIDS Research

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This is the ninth consecutive year that we have published our annual hit parade of putative *Citation Classics*®. For those who have followed this series regularly it will come as no surprise that citation frequency is not an absolute indicator of the most important papers in a particular year. Furthermore, the most-cited articles for that year do not necessarily include all those that will later turn into classics. It is impossible to predict the papers not included in this list that will suddenly or gradually become important in the future. As in popular music, the hot tunes of today may be forgotten in a few years, and oldies may have a revival. But these qualifications have never diminished our interest in the lists of current best-sellers.

The 100 most-cited 1985 life-sciences articles appear in the Bibliography at the end of this essay. They are listed alphabetically by first author. These papers attracted immediate and widespread attention in the science community because they represent "hot," growing, new, or controversial research areas. Papers on signal transduction, atrial natriuretic factor (ANF), and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) have turned up in the two most recent studies in our series.^{1,2} That pattern demonstrates not only widespread research activity but also indicates there is no sign of lessening in the near future. This illustrates how these studies document the progress or decline of hot research areas and can be combined with other indicators to mold science policy and research administration.

Research Fronts

To categorize these papers into broad subject areas, we used ISI®'s database of research fronts. Table 1 lists 15 fronts that include at least two papers from the Bibliography as core documents. The size of these fronts is determined by the number of published, or citing, documents. The largest front identified involves "Protein kinase-C activity, calcium mobilization, and inositol phosphorylation stimulated by phorbol ester receptors" (#86-1983). Over 2,000 papers were published on this topic. The front itself was identified by the same basic co-citation clustering methods we have discussed before. Of the 45 papers in the "core" cluster, 3 are listed in the Bibliography.

The most cited of these is by William L. Farrar, Laboratory of Molecular Immunoregulation, National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Frederick Cancer Research Facility, Frederick, Maryland, and Wayne B. Anderson, Laboratory of Tumor Immunology and Biology, NCI, Bethesda, Maryland. They found that the regulatory peptide interleukin-2 combines with its specific receptor to cause protein kinase-C to be transported to the plasma membrane. This interaction plays a crucial role in signal transduction, the body's signaling system for controlling cellular processes such as metabolism, secretion, contraction, and cell growth. This paper was cited by over 90 papers in 1985 and 1986, and it has been cited over 55 times in the first four months of 1987.

Atrial Natriuretic Factor Studies

Our study of 1985 papers also shows that ANF has developed into one of the most active areas of research, with 10 percent of the papers in the Bibliography dealing with this topic. ANF studies first appeared in our analysis of 1984 papers.²

Early hormone research concentrated on the hormones secreted by the endocrine system, such as the pituitary and thyroid glands. In recent years, there has been increased interest in hormones produced by organs outside of the endocrine system. One such hormone is ANF, which is secreted by the atrium of the heart. It plays a key role in the regulation of blood pressure, sodium, and volume homeostasis. The most-cited 1985 ANF paper was published by R. E. Lang and colleagues, German Institute for High Blood Pressure Research and the Department of Pharmacology, University of Heidelberg, Federal Republic of Germany. This study demonstrates that an increase in body-fluid volumes causes an increase in the concentration of ANF in the blood. Cited 200 times, this paper is 1 of 8 core papers related to "Specific binding sites and systemic and renal hemodynamic effects of rat and human ANF" (#86-1290); 625 papers were published on this topic in 1986 alone. Note that this paper was already a core paper in 1985, and in 1987 it continues to be cited quite heavily.

In a research survey featured in the first edition of the *ISI Atlas of Science*[®]: *Pharmacology*, John H. Laragh, Cardiovascular Center, New York Hospital-Cornell University Medical Center, New York, notes that "although a vast amount of information has accumulated over the past five years, a more complete understanding of the role of [ANF] in normal physiology and in disease is needed before it is possible to determine the therapeutic potential of this exciting new hormone."³ I've discussed the *Atlas of Science* on numerous occasions.⁴ In 1987 we officially launched the first section covering pharmacology. In 1988 three new sections on biochemistry, immunology, and animal and plant science will be published.

AIDS Research

AIDS, the disease that has reached frightening proportions worldwide, continues to be an increasingly active research topic. AIDS was first recognized as a new disease entity in the US in 1981. In 1983 research suggested that the causative agent of the disease might be a human retrovirus. In 1983 and 1984 this agent was isolated and called a variety of names including human T-cell lymphotropic virus type III (HTLV-III) and lymphadenopathy-associated virus (LAV).

By 1985 scientists were concentrating on the molecular characteristics of the virus. For example, Mark A. Muesing, Genentech, Inc., San Francisco, California, and colleagues determined the entire nucleotide sequence for the RNA present in HTLV-III virus particles. Their results showed that the AIDS agent is not similar to previously characterized animal and human retroviruses.

After five years of intense research in a variety of AIDS-related fields, scientists needed to step back to assess the research that had been done and plan the direction that future research should take. This is apparent in the number of AIDS-related progress reports that appear in our 1985 most-cited list. These articles do not report new research. Primarily they compile information regarding the status of research data on the disease. For example, a team from the Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia, led by James W. Curran, published a paper in *Science* called "The epidemiology of AIDS: current status and future prospects." This article documents the history of the disease in the US, as well as the magnitude of the problem and the state of current research.

The year 1985 also marked the development of an effective screening test for AIDS antibodies. A team led by Stanley H. Weiss, Environmental Epidemiology Branch, NCI, evaluated an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) that is very specific and sensitive for AIDS antibodies.

While AIDS research has made startling advances in a relatively short period of time, I suspect that this mission-oriented speedy

Table 1: The 1985 and 1986 *SCI*[®]/*SSCI*[®] research fronts that include at least two of the 1985 most-cited life-sciences papers as core documents. A=number of papers in the Bibliography included in the core of each research front. B=total number of core documents. C=total number of 1985 or 1986 citing documents for the year designated by the prefix in the research-front number.

Number	Name	A	B	C
85-1307	Biological activity, receptor distribution, and the systemic and renal hemodynamic effects of ANF	2	45	319
85-1825	Effects of leukemia virus and other retroviruses on human T-cells in patients with leukemia and AIDS	6	56	1,118
86-0192	Characterization and production of human tumor necrosis factor; related cytotoxic activity by macrophages	2	24	377
86-0403	Embryogenesis of <i>Drosophila</i> and expression of homeotic genes	2	20	357
86-0494	Analysis of muscular dystrophy and other genetic diseases with prenatal diagnosis using DNA probes	2	35	545
86-0547	Expression and regulation of <i>c-myc</i> gene and other oncogenes in human and mouse cells	2	41	945
86-0558	Structure and expression of HTLV-III and other retroviruses associated with AIDS in patients with AIDS and related syndromes	9	54	1,198
86-0633	T-cell antigen receptor gene expression in the activation and function of cytotoxic T-cells	5	59	1,234
86-1290	Specific binding sites and systemic and renal hemodynamic effects of rat and human ANF	8	57	625
86-1983	Protein kinase-C activity, calcium mobilization, and inositol phosphorylation stimulated by phorbol ester receptors	3	45	2,093
86-2283	Pre-messenger RNA splicing <i>in vitro</i> and cleavage at splice sites; nucleotide sequences in RNA transcription	4	32	1,200
86-2851	Inhibition of adenylate cyclase activity by guanine nucleotide-binding protein, pertussis toxin, and other proteins	4	33	753
86-3713	Biochemistry, function, and effects of ANF	3	3	212
86-3728	Expression of human <i>ras</i> protein and other proteins; their role in transforming genes	2	26	569
86-4303	Expression and structure of platelet-derived growth factor, receptor proto-oncogene feline McDonough sarcoma (FMS), and other cell-transforming growth factors	3	13	694

progress would not have occurred if there had not previously been a burgeoning interest in the immune system over the last 20 years. The present-day AIDS research is indebted to the foundation of immunology knowledge established largely for the simple purpose of furthering basic research.

Our study identifies only two research fronts on AIDS, while there were five fronts included in last year's study of 1984 papers. Although this might suggest that AIDS research is on the decline, that is by no means the case. In the 1984 study, five fronts were cited by about 1,200 papers in 1985.² In contrast, the two fronts listed in Table 1 include over 2,300 citing documents. Perhaps more relevant is the number of papers published in 1986 on other aspects of AIDS research, which are not necessarily highlighted by the selections listed above. Were we reporting on everything related to AIDS, there would be dozens of topics that would

not fall into the highly selective group of 1986 research topics represented by this particular group of papers.

The largest AIDS front in Table 1 concerns the "Structure and expression of HTLV-III and other retroviruses associated with AIDS in patients with AIDS and related syndromes" (#86-0558). The paper by George M. Shaw, NCI, and colleagues is 1 of 54 "older" core documents identifying this front of current papers. The results from Shaw's study indicate that HTLV-III may have a role in encephalopathy, a form of dementia that occurs in AIDS patients. Cited 201 times, this paper is the third most-cited article in this study.

D. Carleton Gajdusek, National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke, Bethesda, who coauthored this paper, is one of two Nobelists listed in the Bibliography. Gajdusek shared the 1976 Nobel in physiology or medicine with

Table 2: National locations of the institutional affiliations listed by authors in the Bibliography, according to total appearances (column A). B=number of papers coauthored with researchers affiliated with institutions in other countries. C=national locations of institutions listed by coauthors.

Country	A	B	C
US	75	7	Denmark, Finland, France, Israel, Japan, Switzerland
UK	8	0	
Switzerland	6	1	US
Japan	5	2	US
France	3	1	US
Finland	2	1	US
Australia	1	0	
Belgium	1	0	
Canada	1	0	
Denmark	1	1	US
FRG	1	0	
Israel	1	1	US
New Zealand	1	0	
Sweden	1	0	

Baruch S. Blumberg, Institute for Cancer Research, Philadelphia. Gajdusek's work implicated slow-acting viruses as causal agents in degenerative neurologic disorders.

Walter Gilbert, H.H. Timken Professor of Science, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, shared the 1980 Nobel Prize in chemistry with Paul Berg, Stanford University School of Medicine, California, and Frederick Sanger, Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Medical Research Council, Cambridge, UK. Gilbert has become one of America's most visible scientists, and he might be characterized as the prototypic science entrepreneur. With his new company, the Genome Corporation, he hopes not only to map and sequence human genes but also to copyright these discoveries. The ethical and economic issues involved in monopolizing new chemical and biological discoveries have long been controversial. Mapping the human genome only accentuates the ethical dilemma involved.⁵

In addition to the Nobel Prize, the authors in the Bibliography have received other coveted awards. Just to name a few, J. Michael Bishop, professor of microbiology and immunology, University of California, San Francisco, was awarded the Albert Lasker Basic Medical Research Award in 1982. In 1984 he received the Hammer Prize in

Table 3: The 25 journals that published the 1985 life-sciences papers most cited in the *SCIP*, 1985-1986. The numbers in parentheses are the 1985 impact factors for the journals. (The 1985 impact factor equals the number of 1985 citations received by the 1983-1984 articles in a journal divided by the number of articles published by the journal during that same period.) Data were taken from the *JCR*. The figures at the right indicate how many papers from each journal appear in the Bibliography.

Journal	Number of Papers
Nature (12.9)	30
Science (10.9)	17
Cell (18.9)	14
N. Engl. J. Med. (19.2)	8
J. Biol. Chem. (6.2)	5
Lancet (12.2)	4
Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. USA (9.4)	3
Annu. Rev. Biochem. (39.7)	2
Amer. J. Physiol. (3.0)	1
Ann. Intern. Med. (9.5)	1
Biochem. J. (3.7)	1
Ca—A Cancer J. Clin. (3.6)	1
DNA—J. Molec. Biol. (4.7)	1
Endocrine Rev. (9.2)	1
Gene (4.3)	1
Hypertension (4.0)	1
J. Clin. Invest. (6.9)	1
J. Exp. Med. (11.2)	1
JAMA—J. Am. Med. Assn. (4.2)	1
Kidney Int. (4.9)	1
Microbiol. Rev. (28.8)	1
Neuroendocrinology (3.9)	1
Nucl. Acid. Res. (6.1)	1
Plasmid (3.0)	1
Trends Genet. (N/A)	1

Cancer and the Gairdner Foundation International Award of Merit. Hiroshi Nikaido, professor of microbiology, University of California, Berkeley, received the Paul Ehrlich-Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize in 1969.

Author Information

Our 1985 list contains 514 unique authors affiliated with 101 institutions from 14 countries. Table 2 provides the number of papers produced by authors affiliated with institutions in each nation. US-affiliated authors appear in 75 papers, 7 of which were coauthored with scientists affiliated with institutions in Denmark, Finland, France, Israel, Japan, and Switzerland.

As in our past studies, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) leads the list, appear-

ing 18 times. Fifteen of these papers are from the NCI division. Most of the papers that include authors from NIH deal with AIDS. Of 17 AIDS papers in the Bibliography, 11 were authored by NIH scientists. The University of California and Harvard appear in the Bibliography 13 and 8 times, respectively.

All but six of the papers in the Bibliography have more than one author. Eighteen papers have two authors, 16 papers have three authors, and 16 papers have four authors. Two papers have 19 authors. Thirty-one authors have more than one paper listed in the Bibliography. The two most prolific authors in our study are AIDS researchers from NCI: Flossie Wong-Staal coauthored 7 papers, while 8 papers were coauthored by Robert C. Gallo.

Noteworthy Papers

The 100 papers in the Bibliography were published in the 25 journals listed in Table 3. As in past studies, over 60 percent of the papers were published in *Nature* (30 papers), *Science* (17 papers), or *Cell* (14 papers). Table 3 also includes 1985 impact factors, calculated by dividing the 1985 citations to 1983 and 1984 articles published in a journal by the number of articles published by that journal in those two years.

In our study of 1984 papers, we highlighted the work of J. Downward, Protein Chemistry Laboratory, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, London, UK, and colleagues.² The study showed that the human epidermal growth factor (EGF) receptor has structural or sequence homologies with the tyrosine kinase family of oncogenes.⁶ The second most-cited paper in the Bibliography, by A. Ullrich, Departments of Molecular Biology and Protein Biochemistry, Genentech, and colleagues reveals that the human insulin receptor shows amino-acid sequences similar to EGF and the tyrosine kinase family. Understanding the amino-acid sequence of insulin will help to define the molecular mechanisms of insulin action. Cited 228 times, this paper is core to the front on "Expression and structure of platelet-derived

growth factor, receptor proto-oncogene feline McDonough sarcoma (FMS), and other cell-transforming growth factors" (#86-4303).

The paper by Alec J. Jeffreys, Department of Genetics, University of Leicester, UK, and colleagues describes the discovery of a DNA "fingerprint" technique that is specific for each individual. The authors note that this technique may "provide a powerful method for paternity and maternity testing, can be used in forensic applications and might also be useful in detecting inbreeding between couples who have had an affected offspring possibly caused by an autosomal recessive gene carried by both parents."⁷

The most-cited paper in this study is by Celeste Yanisch-Perron, Jeffrey Vieira, and Joachim Messing, Department of Biochemistry, University of Minnesota, St. Paul. This paper discusses improvements to a DNA-cloning system that relies on bacteriophage M13 and its host, *Escherichia coli*. The cloning of unmodified DNA and of repetitive sequences was improved by the development of new mutant *E. coli* strains, each of which helps prevent certain previously encountered cloning problems. In addition, the complete nucleotide sequences of two M13 cloning vectors were compiled and published, and full-length M13 clones suitable for sequencing were obtained via a new method.

Conclusion

If we had the resources, it would be gratifying to form a Delphic group to forecast which of the studies we have identified will prove to be the fountainhead of exploitable research areas in years to come. Funding agencies, including governments and investment bankers, would like to know where to invest their funds to maximize scientific employment and wealth opportunities. But there is no certainty in such forecasting. Intuition is often as crucial as market research in these decisions. All that scientometrics can provide today is a more informed basis for decision making. Conservative investors base their decisions on past performance.

High-risk investors look for sleepers. Our annual most-cited lists cover current hot topics and discoveries. Our most-cited studies covering a broader time period include articles with an active past performance as well as some that were once sleepers but have since become active. The *ISI Atlas of Science*, mentioned earlier, draws on our citation-frequency data to map activity in science. This helps both the conservative and high-risk research manager to make in-

formed decisions concerning the best areas to invest funds or expend research effort. Have fun!

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A	B	C	Bibliographic Data
16	54	70	Aggarwal B B, Kohr W J, Hass P E, Moffat B, Spencer S A, Henzel W J, Bringman T S, Nedwin G E, Goeddel D V & Harkins R N. Human tumor necrosis factor: production, purification, and characterization. <i>J. Biol. Chem.</i> 260:2345-54, 1985. 86-0192
11	60	71	Arya S K, Guo C, Josephs S F & Wong-Staal F. Trans-activator gene of human T-lymphotropic virus type III (HTLV-III). <i>Science</i> 229:69-73, 1985. 86-0558
26	56	82	Beachy P A, Helfand S L & Hogness D S. Segmental distribution of bithorax complex proteins during <i>Drosophila</i> development. <i>Nature</i> 313:545-51, 1985. 86-0403
5	144	149	Birnstiel M L, Busslinger M & Strub K. Transcription termination and 3' processing: the end is in site! <i>Cell</i> 41:349-59, 1985. 86-2283
2	85	87	Bishop J M. Viral oncogenes. <i>Cell</i> 42:23-38, 1985.
17	55	72	Boeke J D, Garfinkel D J, Styles C A & Fink G R. Ty elements transpose through an RNA intermediate. <i>Cell</i> 40:491-500, 1985. 86-1655
23	72	95	Brain S D, Williams T J, Tippins J R, Morris H R & MacIntyre I. Calcitonin gene-related peptide is a potent vasodilator. <i>Nature</i> 313:54-6, 1985. 86-0721
11	59	70	Brody E & Abelson J. The "spliceosome": yeast pre-messenger RNA associates with a 40S complex in a splicing-dependent reaction. <i>Science</i> 228:963-7, 1985. 86-2283
14	117	131	Cantin M & Genest J. The heart and the atrial natriuretic factor. <i>Endocrine Rev.</i> 6:107-27, 1985. 86-3713
16	56	72	Ceredig R, Lowenthal J W, Nabholz M & MacDonald H R. Expression of interleukin-2 receptors as a differentiation marker on intrathymic stem cells. <i>Nature</i> 314:98-100, 1985. 86-0633
22	68	90	Cerutti P A. Prooxidant states and tumor promotion. <i>Science</i> 227:375-81, 1985. 86-3901
5	67	72	Chen E Y & Seeburg P H. Supercoil sequencing: a fast and simple method for sequencing plasmid DNA. <i>DNA—J. Molec. Biol.</i> 4:165-70, 1985.

A	B	C	Bibliographic Data
26	142	168	Cockcroft S & Gomperts B D. Role of guanine nucleotide binding protein in the activation of polyphosphoinositide phosphodiesterase. <i>Nature</i> 314:534-6, 1985. 86-2851
26	66	92	Cooper D A, Maclean P, Finlayson R, Michelmore H M, Gold J, Donovan B, Barnes T G, Brooke P & Penny R. Acute AIDS retrovirus infection. <i>Lancet</i> 1:537-40, 1985.
23	66	89	Croce C M, Isobe M, Palumbo A, Puck J, Ming J, Tweardy D, Erikson J, Davis M & Rovera G. Gene for α -chain of human T-cell receptor: location on chromosome 14 region involved in T-cell neoplasms. <i>Science</i> 227:1044-7, 1985. 86-1364
4	78	82	Curran J W, Morgan W M, Hardy A M, Jaffe H W, Darrow W W & Dowdle W R. The epidemiology of AIDS: current status and future prospects. <i>Science</i> 229:1352-7, 1985.
29	45	74	Dale R M K, McClure B A & Houchins J P. A rapid single-stranded cloning strategy for producing a sequential series of overlapping clones for use in DNA sequencing: application to sequencing the corn mitochondrial 18 S rDNA. <i>Plasmid</i> 13:31-40, 1985.
5	109	114	Dynan W S & Tijian R. Control of eukaryotic messenger RNA synthesis by sequence-specific DNA-binding proteins. <i>Nature</i> 316:774-8, 1985.
15	88	103	Ebina Y, Ellis L, Jarnagin K, Edery M, Graf L, Clauser E, Ou J-h, Masiazk F, Kan Y W, Goldfine I D, Roth R A & Rutter W J. The human insulin receptor cDNA: the structural basis for hormone-activated transmembrane signalling. <i>Cell</i> 40:747-58, 1985. 86-4303
29	60	89	Ephrussi A, Church G M, Tonegawa S & Gilbert W. B lineage-specific interactions of an immunoglobulin enhancer with cellular factors in vivo. <i>Science</i> 227:134-40, 1985. 86-1674
12	79	91	Farrar W L & Anderson W B. Interleukin-2 stimulates association of protein kinase C with plasma membrane. <i>Nature</i> 315:233-5, 1985. 86-1983
5	62	67	Fauci A S, Masur H, Gelmann E P, Markham P D, Hahn B H & Lane H C. The acquired immunodeficiency syndrome: an update. <i>Ann. Intern. Med.</i> 102:800-13, 1985.
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19	52	71	Feorino P M, Jaffe H W, Palmer E, Peterman T A, Francis D P, Kalyanaraman V S, Weinstein R A, Stoneburner R L, Alexander W J, Raevsky C, Getchell J P, Warfield D, Haverkos H W, Kilbourne B W, Nicholson J K A & Curran J W. Transfusion-associated acquired immunodeficiency syndrome: evidence for persistent infection in blood donors. <i>N. Engl. J. Med.</i> 312:1293-6, 1985. 85-5421
31	53	84	Fisher B, Bauer M, Margolese R, Poisson R, Pilch Y, Redmond C, Fisher E, Wolmark N, Deutsch M, Montague E, Saffer E, Wickerham L, Lerner H, Glass A, Shibata H, Deckers P, Ketcham A, Olshi R & Russell I. Five-year results of a randomized clinical trial comparing total mastectomy and segmental mastectomy with or without radiation in the treatment of breast cancer. <i>N. Engl. J. Med.</i> 312:665-73, 1985. 85-1319, 86-0715
51	74	125	Gonda M A, Wong-Staal F, Gallo R C, Clements J E, Narayan O & Gilden R V. Sequence homology and morphologic similarity of HTLV-III and visna virus, a pathogenic lentivirus. <i>Science</i> 227:173-7, 1985. 85-1825, 86-0558
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