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The journal's mission is to "promote human health by providing a forum for communication and cross-fertilization among basic, translational, and clinical research practitioners and trainees from all relevant established and emerging disciplines."

Examples of content include:
- Investigative studies of human biology with an emphasis on disease, including small clinical trials
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- Focus, Perspectives and Reviews that discuss medically related research from a basic science and a clinical point of view
- Commentary on policy, funding, education and regulatory issues in translational medicine
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The editors and an international advisory group of scientists and clinician-scientists as well as other experts hold Science Translational Medicine articles to the same high-quality standard that is the hallmark of the journal Science.