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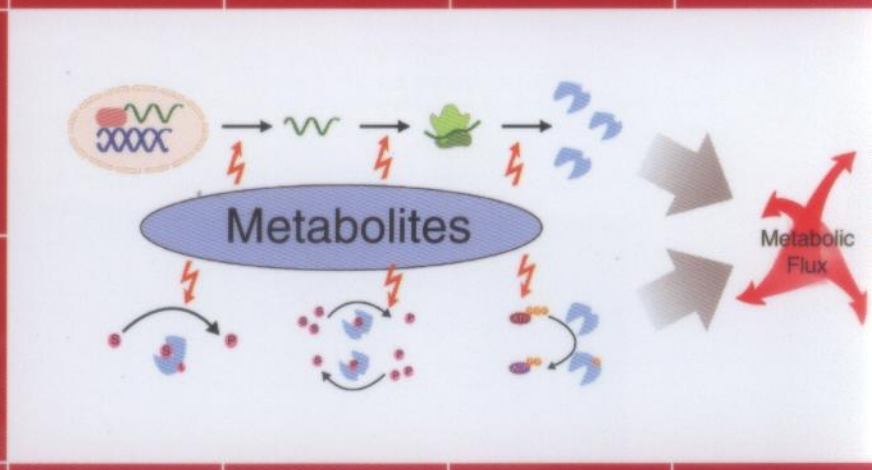

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CONTENTS

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The cover

Metabolites are involved in the modulation of metabolic fluxes. Based on their concentrations, small molecules directly influence the rates of coupled biochemical reactions. Allosteric interactions between metabolites and enzymes provide an efficient and fast mechanism for controlling metabolic fluxes and allow for an immediate response to environmental perturbations. By interfering with transcriptional and translational regulation, metabolites are also involved in long term regulatory processes. (See Wegner *et al.*, pages 16–22, this issue).