

EDITORIAL

Recent developments in the International Journal of Laboratory Hematology

The last 2 years have been difficult for everyone, but we are grateful for the help and support that you have given to the International Journal for Laboratory Haematology (IJLH). IJLH continues to process articles concerning COVID-19 as quickly as possible, to play our small part in helping to defeat this disease. These papers are currently published by Wiley with free access and are listed in a special directory as well as appearing in regular issues of the Journal. We have welcomed new Associate Editors Katrien Devreese and John Frater and wish to thank Alexandra Harrington and Peter Quehenberger for their service. The Editorial Board has also been refreshed in order to maintain a broad range of expertise and current opinion and now numbers 35 individuals with a wide International representation. With regret, two of our board members, Elizabeth van Cott and Sam Machin died last year^{1,2} and they will be sorely missed, having contributed to the Journal not just as Board members, but also as Guest Editors, reviewers and authors.

The Journal continues to thrive and has seen a great increase in manuscript submissions (634, 1055, and 1150 in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively). It is unclear whether this is due to the large numbers of manuscripts received concerning COVID-19, the fact that so many people have been working from home and perhaps catching up with writing up their research, or if it will prove to be a general trend. Despite the increase in manuscripts, we have managed to maintain our turnaround times (77 days to acceptance and 109 days to online publication), while maintaining a similar acceptance rate (27%). We have also seen an increase in the number of articles published (171 in 2019 and 323 in 2021) and the use of open access has continued to grow, with numerous transitional agreements arranged by Wiley. The readership figures have also increased, rising from 368_810 in 2019 to 891_760 in 2021. We were pleased to achieve a higher impact factor of 2.877 in 2020, although this must be interpreted with caution as most medical journals had an uplift in impact factor due to a change in the method of calculation (articles accepted and appearing online being included in the figures rather than just those assigned to an issue in the calendar year).

In 2021 we introduced a new manuscript category, Case Images. These are short articles of up to 500 words, describing an interesting, novel haematological image and the first of these appeared in Volume 43 Issue 1.^{3,4} These have proved to be an outstanding success and 55 manuscripts of this type were accepted in 2021, resulting in a special issue featuring Case Images in 2022 (Volume 44: 1). We take this opportunity to remind potential authors that the images need to be of

high quality, so that they will be legible in the final print issue of the Journal (the Editors recommend no more than two images in up to two Figures).

The journal now offers Free Format submission. Authors only need to follow journal style requirements if their paper is accepted. This allows authors to easily submit their paper in any format, as a single file including text, figures, and tables, or separate files; references may be submitted in any style or format, as long as this is consistent throughout the manuscript.

IJLH refers approximately 32% of rejected manuscripts to other Wiley titles. This gives the authors an opportunity to publish more quickly and easily as they do not have to restart the submission from scratch. IJLH currently refers to: Advances in Cell and Gene Therapy, Advances in Haematology, Journal of Clinical Laboratory Analysis, Health Science Reports, and Cancer Reports (negotiations with other journals are in progress) and IJLH also receives manuscripts from certain journals in a similar fashion.

The journal is introducing a new cover style this year, with a redesign and update. Authors will have the opportunity, if they wish, to display images from their publications via the Wiley Cover Image Program.

Finally, a reminder and request for help. If you have published scientific papers, you should be prepared to critically review those of others and to provide a fair, unbiased critique, treating the manuscript in the way that you would expect your own work to be treated. Editors of science journals often struggle to find suitable reviewers and if you have to decline a review request, it would be helpful if you could suggest some alternative potential reviewers. This helps us to maintain the quality of our review process and turnaround time, as well as developing, new, young expert scientific reviewers.

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