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EDITORIAL



Chief Editor's 2021 annual report

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to restrict our movement and interactions, but we have become more accustomed to working online and developing new forms of communication. Our editorial office team is still working remotely, providing as exemplary a service to our community as ever. We have begun attending meetings in mix of online and in-person formats, and can only hope that the coming year will see more face-to-face interactions for the events in our field, as well as for our *RBMO* team.

Firstly, I would like to share the good news of our all-time high 2020 impact factor of 3.83. This represents a significant increase compared with previous years (FIGURE 1) in which we take great pride thanks to the intense collaboration between authors, referees, editors, section editors and, last but not least, our editorial office team.

The year saw the introduction of several new section editors to the *RBMO* team; Guido Pennings (Reproduction,

Technology and Society); Esther Baart, Monica Laronda, and Maurizio Zuccotti (Experimental Reproductive Biology); Galia Oron (Periconception, Pregnancy, Children Outcomes); Nicolas Garrido, Darren Griffin, and Phil Matson (Male Reproductive Health and Fertility). We would like express our gratitude to Emlyn Parfitt whose term at *RBMO* came to an end in 2021 and, finally, we were very sad to say goodbye to our dear colleague of many years, Joy Delhanty, whose life was recognised and honoured in an obituary in December (Griffin, 2021).

Last year we set ourselves the goal of publishing one or two high-quality invited reviews per monthly issue. In total, we published 28 reviews in 2021, along with four Editorials. These, as well as our regular highlighted *Editor's Choice* paper in each issue plus newly-accepted papers flagged online as 'Hot Topics', are free to view and download for a period. At the end of the year we launched an exciting new article type in the form of invited *Countercurrent* contributions where selected authors are

given the opportunity to air potentially controversial views that contrast with mainstream thinking. The concept has been enthusiastically received, allowing us to plan for one *Countercurrent* contribution per issue in the coming year, many of which are already available online. Indeed, the journal's online *Articles in Press* section enables us to bring all newly-accepted papers to our readers as pre-proofs within days of acceptance – many weeks before inclusion in an issue – allowing readers to access the most current results, and authors to begin sharing their work, without delay.

We received a total of 1056 submissions in 2021 and published 247 papers in the 12 monthly issues; a slight reduction from 2020, with a concurrent decrease in the number of accepted papers (FIGURE 2). The average time from submission to final acceptance for papers accepted in 2021 was 121 days (17 weeks), which includes the time needed for authors to revise their submission following peer review. For papers receiving a reject

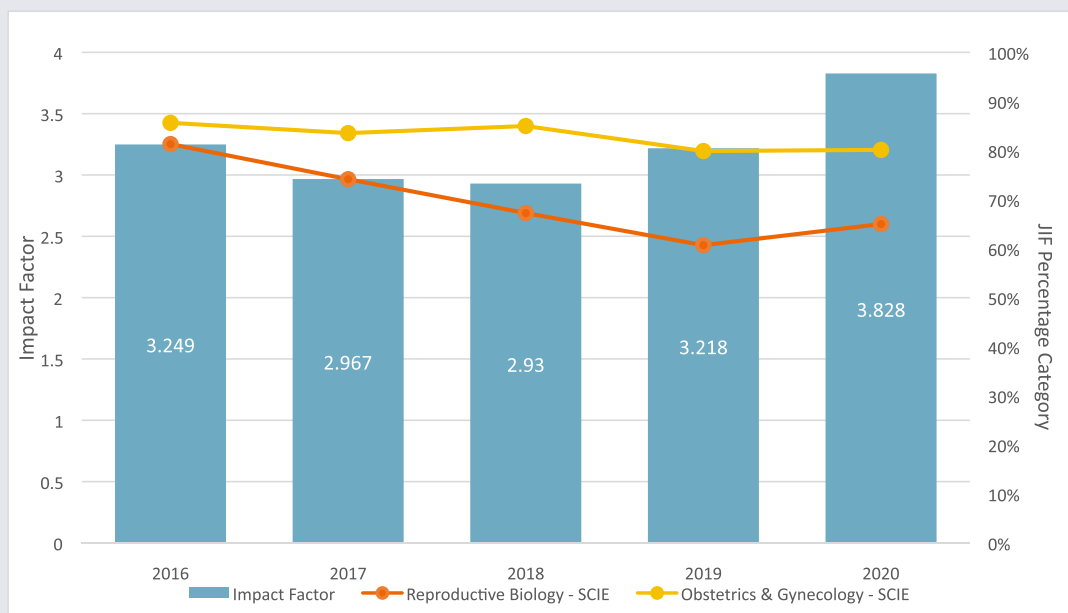


FIGURE 1 RBMO impact factor trend and category ranking percentile, 2016–2020.

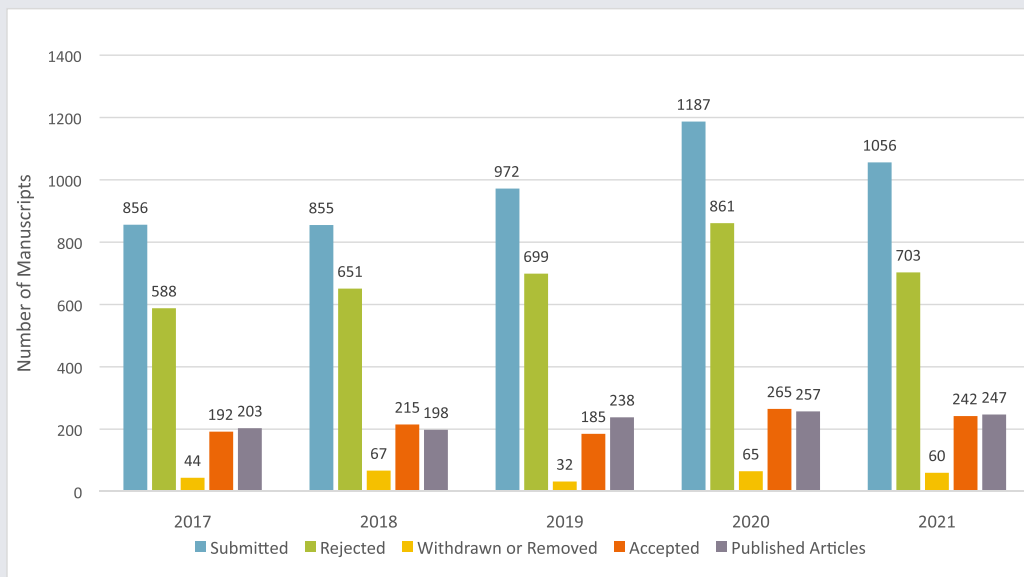


FIGURE 2 RBMO submission, reject, accept status from 2017–2021.

decision following review, the average time to decision was 32 days (just under 5 weeks). We are very proud of the efforts made by our editorial office team, section editors, and editorial board in providing our authors with a thorough and constructive peer review process in such a short timeframe. And yet, we still aim to reduce these times as much as possible in the pursuit of speeding communication of research, not just for publications in *RBMO*; by giving authors a fast reject decision it is our hope that they will find other relevant journals for their work, or can rectify any necessary issues, as soon as possible.

We aim to present advances across the whole range of research in biomedical

reproduction, as evidenced by the mix of papers published in the eight sections of the journal (FIGURE 3). We continue to receive manuscripts from all over the world, with submissions from corresponding authors based in 63 different countries, with papers from 33 of those countries being accepted for publication. China remains the country contributing the greatest number of submissions and accepted papers, with Spain, USA, Italy and Belgium in the next tranche of most frequently featured author countries (FIGURE 4).

In addition to the new *Countercurrent* contributions, we launched another new initiative for the journal – a quarterly webinar series, titled *RBMO LIVE*, in

collaboration with the *International IVF Initiative* (i3). We held four sessions over the year, highlighting different sections of the journal, individual papers, and showcasing the interesting progressive research published in the journal, not only from well-established ‘big names’ in the field, but also from up-and-coming younger researchers. These webinars have been watched by an audience of thousands, based in around 70 different countries, tuning in to watch each session live.

We would like to extend congratulations to the authors of our most-read papers published in 2021; to Marita Hennessy and colleagues for their systematic review *Clinical practice guidelines for recurrent miscarriage in high-income countries* (Hennessy et al., 2021), Kezhen Li and team for *Analysis of sex hormones and menstruation in COVID-19 women of child-bearing age* (Li et al., 2021), which also ranked among the top *Altmetric* scores in the field, and from a group led by Juan Espinos *Impact of chronic endometritis in infertility: a SWOT analysis* (Espinos et al., 2021).

It is not only recent papers that receive many views; works from across the entire history of the journal continue to inform current practices and progress, with papers from 2001, 2005, 2008 and all the way through the years appearing in the top 20 most-read articles over the last year.

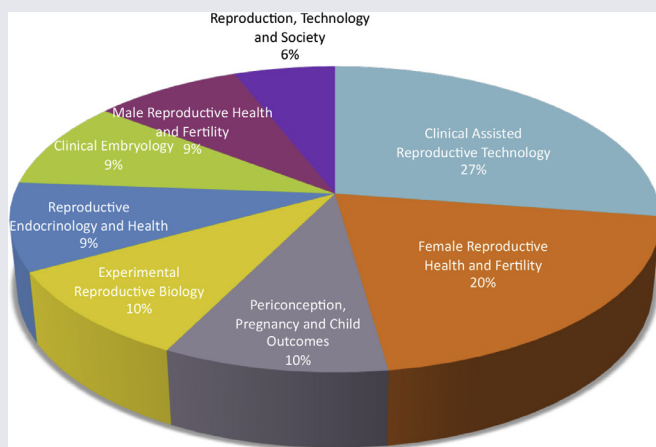


FIGURE 3 Proportion of *RBMO* papers published per section in 2021.

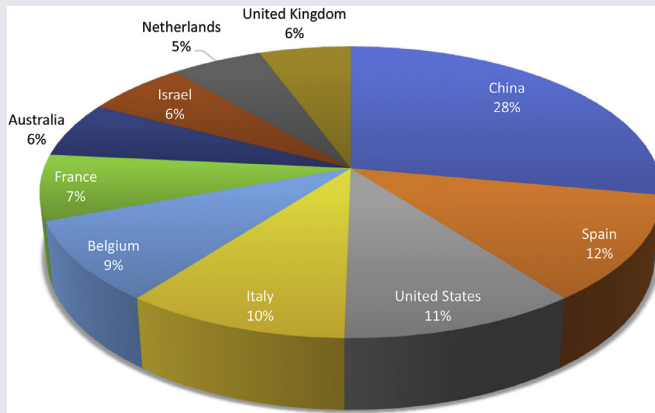


FIGURE 4 Top 10 most frequently published corresponding author countries in 2021.

Finally, we mark the end of another milestone year by honouring the winner and two runners-up of the *Robert G. Edwards Prize Paper Award* for the best paper published in 2020. These papers, detailed below, were presented at the RBMO session of the COGI meeting held in December 2021. The winning paper was: *Drug-free in-vitro activation of follicles for infertility treatment in poor ovarian response patients with decreased ovarian reserve* by Kazuhiro Kawamura, Bunpei Ishizuka and Aaron JW Hsueh (*Kawamura et al., 2020*). The two runners-up were: *‘There is only one thing that is truly important in an IVF laboratory: everything’ Cairo Consensus Guidelines on IVF Culture Conditions* (*Cairo 2018 Consensus Group, 2020*) and *Organoids can be established reliably from cryopreserved biopsy catheter-*

derived endometrial tissue of infertile women (*Bui et al., 2020*).

We wish our readers a productive and safe 2022 and look forward to hearing from you soon.

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