

EDITORIAL



## New milestones for IOTECH in 2022

*Dear colleagues and friends,*

We are approaching the end of 2021, a year of both hope and despair. Hope because of the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines in a large number of countries, leading to better defenses against COVID-19 in our patients, families, friends and colleagues, fewer personal restrictions and perhaps paving the road towards a more normal situation. Despair because, despite the high coverage of vaccinations, hospitals and ICUs are starting to be flooded again with COVID-19 patients, a reality check, that this pandemic is far from over. Vaccines, although effective in preventing or attenuating the COVID-19 virus, SARS-CoV-2, have only very limited effect on viral spread, and full protection from vaccination, appears short(er) lived, especially against new mutated viral strains, such as delta (B.1.617.2) and perhaps omicron (B.1.1.529). Societal impact of this pandemic is increasing, especially in hospitals with incline in burn-outs of health care providers, both doctors and nursing staff,<sup>1</sup> because of work deployments and continuous work and personal stress enforced by COVID-19 for already two years.

Importantly and in contrast to when SARS-CoV-2 started to terrorize the world and labs needed to be closed, scientific work has regained its high level of the pre-COVID-19 period. In addition, over 180,000 scientific manuscripts, good and bad, have been written about this coronavirus and disease, illustrating that science will always prevail.

Looking back at the past year, immunotherapy of cancer has further expanded, benefitting more patients, with novel approvals of both immune checkpoint inhibition-based strategies and immune effector cell treatments in more cancers and in earlier disease stages. BCMA CAR-T therapy is a new treatment option for patients with refractory multiple myeloma,<sup>2</sup> inducing high remission rates. Anti-PD-1 has been approved as adjuvant therapy for esophageal-gastric cancers<sup>3</sup> and high-risk clear cell renal cell cancer<sup>4</sup> improving disease free survival. The concept of neoadjuvant immunotherapy-based approaches has become widely embraced as a platform for translational research and a strategy to further improve efficacy by better mobilizing endogenous immune responses.

Novel technologies, especially single cell analyses, circulating tumor DNA assays, high modality imaging allowing to combine high resolution spatial cellular distribution with transcriptome analyses, are uncovering insights in tumor-immune interactions, which inevitably will

lead to better understanding of immune escape mechanisms and novel targets for cancer treatment. Immunotherapy, although among us for no more than 10 years, is still at its infancy.

Three years ago, IOTECH was launched as the latest Open Access journal from ESMO, a complementary publication to Annals of Oncology and ESMO Open. We have published high-quality review papers on a broad range of IO subjects, and original science papers, which have been downloaded thousands of times by ESMO members and others interested in this field of research from around the globe. Just this week we have received the news that IOTECH has been accepted for coverage in Scopus the world's largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature which will further extend our reach and impact and we look forward to receiving our first CiteScore. In 2022, as our archive of published articles reaches the threshold for submission, IOTECH will actively pursue coverage by the other major public databases and repositories. I am sure this will help us further increase our already significant number of citations in the oncology and immunology literature, as we take the next steps towards receiving our first Impact Factor.

As in previous years, the scientific part of 2021 ended with the ESMO Immuno-Oncology Congress 2021, which unfortunately needed to be changed from a face-to-face meeting to a completely virtual meeting at the last minute. From 2022 we are delighted that IOTECH will publish the accepted abstracts from this meeting, another milestone in IOTECH's progress to becoming another ESMO flagship journal.

Wishing you all wonderful Seasonal Holidays and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2022!

John Haanen

*Divisions of Medical Oncology and Molecular Oncology & Immunology, Netherlands Cancer Institute, Amsterdam, the Netherlands*

(E-mail: [j.haanen@nki.nl](mailto:j.haanen@nki.nl)).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iotech.2021.100060>

### REFERENCES

1. Banerjee S, Lim KHJ, Murali K, et al. The impact of COVID-19 on oncology professionals: results of the ESMO Resilience Task Force survey collaboration. *ESMO Open*. 2021;6:100058.

2. Munshi NC, Anderson LD Jr, Shah N, et al. Idecabtagene vicleucel in relapsed and refractory multiple myeloma. *N Engl J Med.* 2021;384:705-716.
3. Kelly RJ, Ajani JA, Kuzdzal J, et al. LBA9\_PR Adjuvant nivolumab in resected esophageal or gastroesophageal junction cancer (EC/GEJC) following neoadjuvant chemoradiation therapy (CRT): first results of the CheckMate 577 study. *Ann Oncol.* 2020;31:S1193-S1194.
4. Choueiri TK, Tomczak P, Park SH, et al. Adjuvant pembrolizumab after nephrectomy in renal-cell carcinoma. *N Engl J Med.* 2021;385:683-694.