


COVID-19 and Journals: 2 Years Later

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It has now been several years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. While there have been many challenges, this has forced all of us to alter our workflow and behavior, adapting to the new normal. Although these changes came out of necessity initially, I think many of us look back and realize that we have progressed forward in how we now perform, changed our expectations, and have improved on many of the things we have done in the same way for years. In the world of scientific publishing for spine research, this was a great opportunity for change.

In 2020, submissions for all medical journals were at an all-time high as people likely had more time to devote to their research and manuscripts. However, we also saw that the volunteer reviewers for articles were more difficult to find to review in a timely manner. This is likely due to many folks possibly feeling overwhelmed or needing to adapt, and perhaps had less time to devote to reviewing articles. This resulting in a longer delay for completing reviews, and longer waiting times for our submitted authors to receive their decisions on their submissions. I would also guess that most of us critically examined our personal time, and perhaps reset our values on our personal activities, which lead us to pick and choose how we spend our time more wisely. I do believe this has resulted in better reviews, with those who are passionate about contributing to better science, devoting their time to pick the best studies for publication. We thank all of our volunteer editorial board and reviewers for their hard work and devotion to the journal throughout the pandemic.

We have resumed in-person meetings, which I believe have actually benefited from the pandemic. We are so used to virtual meetings and the limitations of only seeing folks on a screen, that when one actually attends an in-person

meeting, I suspect we are now much more appreciative of the live interactions. I believe the in-person meetings are now more exciting and valuable, perhaps because we have learned to appreciate the benefits of face-to-face interactions.

We have also seen an influx of many COVID related papers creating an entirely new topic of research and manuscripts. We had a huge surge in 2020, but throughout 2021 and 2022 we are still getting a steady stream of these manuscripts, showing the popularity and durability of this topic. We have created an entire Special Collection on our Special Collections landing page featuring all of our COVID related papers for readers to access on our website.

One of the best things we learned was that our publisher was still able to function at full capacity despite moving operations to the home in 2020. We have had uninterrupted service from the publisher and no delays in our production and publication schedules. We are pleased that GSJ was not negatively impacted during this time and that we could still provide to you a quality product to read and submit to during the pandemic.

I am sure we will have more challenges to face in the future, and the pandemic is certainly not over. However, we are pleased that GSJ has been able to thrive and continue to grow strongly during these past years.

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