



Celebrating 1 Year of *ATS Scholar*

Looking Back and Envisioning the Road Ahead

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On February 21, 2020, the American Thoracic Society (ATS) launched *ATS Scholar*, a new peer-reviewed, open-access journal focused on bringing health profession education literature to the pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine community. This was 1 month after the first case of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was identified in the United States and the start of a year defined by an outbreak that rapidly escalated to world-wide pandemic status (1). Oh, what a year it has been!

Since the launch, *ATS Scholar* has published 76 manuscripts archived in four quarterly issues (Volume 1, Issues 1–4). We have engaged with our community of readers across media platforms, with the *Scholarly* podcast (a collaboration with the ATS Section of Medical Education) and the @ATSScholar Twitter account. To date, 18 *Scholarly* podcasts have taken a deeper dive into *Journal* articles, and @ATSScholar has highlighted articles and amplified authors to more than 1,700 Twitter followers.

To reflect on this year, we must go back to the beginning. When we introduced *ATS Scholar* (2), our mission was to publish innovative content about the education and training of health professionals that would be relevant to the broad ATS community. Although this was our heartfelt commitment, we were nervous that our passion might overestimate engagement. We were thrilled that authors from our community of educators, scientists, and clinicians quickly began to submit unique high-quality content in our fields of interest. Throughout the year, this pool has only grown.

We published original research manuscripts that provided insights into fellowship training, such as studies determining the impact of video game-based training on bronchoscopy skills (3) and a Delphi process to develop a focused cardiac ultrasound assessment tool for learners from different specialties (4). *ATS Scholar* had articles on the training and retention of physician scientists, including

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an original research paper assessing the impact of a 3-day educational program on career development of junior investigators (5) and a compelling perspective that addressed challenges for those underrepresented in medicine groups and women physician-scientists (6). Similarly, Nelson and colleagues identified themes that affect the decision to pursue pediatric pulmonary fellowship training as well as delineated strategies that might positively influence that decision (7).

Teamwork is essential to all that we do in medicine. Accordingly, we have prioritized interprofessional education as a topic of importance to the *Journal*. In 2020, articles described the outcome of an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation training program for advanced practice providers and physicians (8) and detailed the training of medical students to serve as respiratory therapist extenders during a COVID-19 surge, leveraging the expertise of both respiratory therapists and physicians (9). In 2021, we are excited to announce a call for papers for an interprofessional education special collection that we hope to publish by the year's end.

Finally, issues surrounding gender equity and diversity in medicine are critical to our practice and the education and training of our next generation. We have published important work in this area, such as an article by Santhosh and Babik (10) that reports trends in gender, race, and ethnicity among pulmonary/critical care medicine fellows and applicants over the last decade and finds continued disparities. Recognizing the need to openly address the role structural racism plays in persistent disparities in medicine, *ATS Scholar* has sought to publish papers that provide meaningful insight and propose thoughtful solutions to this issue in health profession education. An article by Quinn Capers provided practical tips on how to mitigate implicit bias in undergraduate and

graduate medical education candidate selection (11). Additional institutional approaches and outcomes will be published in a special collection in 2021.

Being mindful of known editorial board gender imbalances (12) and how they may impact editorial decisions, the *ATS Scholar* Editorial Board membership is purposefully gender equal, both at the senior editor level and in the overall Editorial Board. As we continue to build the Editorial Board, we commit to maintaining gender equality and pledge to strive for greater diversity in other domains, including race. Our goal is for the board to become one that reflects the diversity of the patient populations we serve, as well as one that will bring unique perspectives to the peer review process.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ATS Scholar launched just as the COVID-19 pandemic was unfolding. We struggled with how to best meet the needs of our readers while supporting nonintensivist clinicians deployed to care for critically ill patients with COVID-19, many for the first time since residency training. Though we knew we needed to leverage the expertise of our community of clinician educators, we also knew these experts were on the frontline caring for an overwhelming number of patients with COVID-19. How could they meet this need?

We applaud the authors and reviewers who took time from their busy clinical schedule during the pandemic to enable *ATS Scholar* to pivot to practical clinical education pieces for COVID-19. High-quality, peer-reviewed videos were among our most viewed publications, particularly the series “Ventilators for Nonintensivists,” including videos on basic ventilator parameters (13), as well as an excellent

video on how to properly perform a nasopharyngeal COVID-19 swab (14). Practical manuscripts that could serve as “just-in-time” tools during clinical care, such as troubleshooting problems in the ventilated patient (15), were widely read and broadly shared on social media. We published opinion pieces on how training was impacted by COVID-19, including perspectives from the first fellowship in the United States that had to modify its training program because of COVID-19 (16) as well as an international view from a pulmonary fellowship program in Ireland (17). These experiences informed our community, as many had to make similar modifications in real time.

We also realized that it was important to hear from our learners, so an entirely new publication category in *ATS Scholar*, “View from the Learner,” was created in June. This led to powerful publications, including one from a medical student who graduated early to care for patients at the height of the surge in New York City (18) and a series of reflections on the pandemic from a pulmonary and critical care fellow (19).

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In the upcoming years, *ATS Scholar* will continue to evolve. Although our goal will always be to publish high-quality content related to the training of health professionals, we encourage authors to be innovative, to identify opportunities to use media to enhance manuscripts, and to fully utilize the online platform to create novel content and unique educational experiences for our readers. Because video is an increasingly popular and important platform for education, we decided to make video a unique category of publication. It appears that this category resonated with readers, as several videos

were among the most viewed publications from Year 1.

Over the past 12 months, we have heard from many voices and have explored a diverse array of educational domains. As *ATS Scholar* moves into its second year, we want to further our reach. We hope to publish more content from international educators, as we realize the value of learning beyond our borders. In the spirit of interprofessional education, we are actively seeking authors from the entire spectrum of healthcare professions. We are also looking to expand content on the education and training of physician-scientists and biomedical researchers, key members of the ATS community. Furthermore, we intend to develop the “How I Teach” publications, which are narrative reviews from master educators sharing their personal approach to teaching about pulmonary, critical care, and sleep topics.

Despite a pandemic, the health profession education community provided exceptional submissions for the successful launch of *ATS Scholar*. This would not have been possible without both the dedicated *ATS Scholar* Editorial Board, who led and ensured timely and thoughtful peer review, and the amazing Editorial Staff, who we see as our *ATS Scholar* family. On a personal note, launching the *Journal* during this challenging year has been a source of comfort and purpose for each of us. We hope that has translated in some small way to the ATS community, our readers, and our patients. *ATS Scholar* has filled an unmet need to complement the other ATS journals, and we are excited to build the *Journal* in the upcoming years, hopefully without a pandemic to fight!

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