

European Journal of
Immunology
Editorial

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on EJI and the extended immunological community



Dear readers,

As 2021 is starting, I would like to reflect on some of the challenges our researchers and authors have faced during the past year. 2020 has been one of the toughest for the entire scientific community. Since the outbreak of SARS-CoV2, many countries have and are still locked down, leading to major disruptions in our everyday professional and private lives. Scientific research institutions have been hit hard, with many of us working from home and some juggling home child care at the same time [1]. The medical community is mobilized with heroic health care workers treating an ever-growing number of COVID-19 patients. And academic labs have swung their research focus towards SARS-CoV-2 in an attempt to understand the pathophysiology of COVID-19 and to discover new treatments for this disease (see News&EFIS section of this issue for more details). Despite these difficulties,

the immunological community is navigating the current situation and leading the charge against this global health hazard, a battle that, I am convinced, will be won and will be one of the greatest victories for immunologists and virologists. During this crisis, immunological researchers across the globe have united their forces and developed innovative approaches for diagnostics and vaccine design [2–4]. We are also witnessing enormous productivity within our community as evidenced by the plethora of groundbreaking COVID-19 research articles published [5–7]. As the chair of the Executive Committee (ExCo) of the *European Journal of Immunology*, I'm particularly pleased to see that EJI's COVID-19 research articles are among our top downloaded articles [8,9].

During the past year, the EJI editorial team has recognized the difficulties that our scientific community has faced and we've implemented SARS-CoV2 policies, offering flexibility to both our authors and referees, who may need extra time to perform experiments and review papers, respectively. We've fast-tracked peer review for COVID-19 manuscripts and I want to take this opportunity to thank our trusted referees who've helped with this despite their incredibly busy schedules. In addition to our SARS-CoV2 policies for fast tracking, we are still implementing our policy to fast-track manuscripts (typically one week) if there is a competitive situation, including recently scooped papers. For more information, please take a look at our peer review policies.

I'd also like to use this opportunity to express gratitude to our loyal readers and authors across the globe. I am very pleased to see that this year we have published articles not only from Europe

(59%) but also Asia-Pacific (24%), North, Central and South America (15%) and Africa & Middle East (2%). The flow cytometry guidelines are still our number one accessed article [10]. In addition, we continue to encourage submission of clinical papers [11] and have recently published a clinical guideline consisting of recommendations for the treatment and care of patients with primary antibody deficiencies [12].

As most conferences and meetings have gone virtual, our editorial meetings have followed a similar path (Fig. 1). Despite initial concerns that our virtual brainstorming sessions may not be able to substitute those taking place in person, we found that our virtual meetings can be efficient, creative and generate ideas some of which we will bring forward this year. I am indebted to our dedicated ExCo members for their active participation in building the Journal's strategy. In particular, I want to thank Maria Yazdanbakhsh, Iain McInnes and Ken Murphy (who will/has stepped down as ExCo members) for their help and support over the past years. I am also happy to welcome two new ExCo members: Anca Catrina (Sweden) and Muzlifah Haniffa (UK), who've enriched our team with their expertise in clinical and systems immunology, respectively.

Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to mention that in 2021 EJI will celebrate a very special anniversary — the first issue of EJI appeared in 1971 so EJI is turning 50! Another major event will be the European Congress of Immunology that takes place in Belgrade in September. More on our planned activities related to our anniversary and on EJI's activities at this Congress in our next editorial.

To close, I wish you a healthy and successful start in this new year, and as



Figure 1. EJI's Executive Committee and in-house editorial team brainstorming during one of the strategy meetings. From top to bottom: James Di Santo (France), Nadja Bakocevic (Germany), Steffen Jung (Israel), Cate Livingstone (Germany), Hamida Hammad (Belgium), Chiara Romagnani (Germany), Muzlifah Haniffa (UK), Shimon Sakaguchi (Japan), Christian Münz (Switzerland), Vanessa Boura (Germany, shown by VB), Anca Catrina (Sweden, shown by AC) and Bin Li (China).

always, I look forward to your feedback and suggestions how we could improve EJI and continue to serve our immunological community.

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