Hello from the new Editor-in-Chief

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Editor-in-Chief replacing Professor Jaap Van Laar, for the next five years. I am a rheumatologist working in the northwest of England who has been an Associate Editor of this Journal from 2011 to 2014 and Co-editor since then.

I would like to start by paying a tribute to the team who have looked after the Journal for the last five years; they have achieved continued success and built on the successes of Professor Rob Moots and Professor Richard Watts before him. The Journal has achieved so much in the time Professor van Laar has been at the helm, with a rising Impact Factor year-on-year peaking at 5.245, >3200 followers on Twitter, the successful launch of our sister journal aimed at health professionals—Rheumatology Advances in Practice, edited by the very same Professor Richard Watts—and the publication of some very interesting and controversial editorials, provoking debate and thought both online and in print. We have also seen a huge increase in online downloads—we achieved over 3 million full-text downloads in 2017, and a remarkable growth in listeners to and views of our podcasts and videos. We hope this will continue to grow and in order to do this, I have appointed a Digital Editor, Dr James Galloway, a current Co-editor and long-time supporter of Rheumatology and the British Society for Rheumatology. Although summarizing papers in a few minutes can be quite challenging, in an era when we are almost at information overload, these modern methods of communication are going to be vital to ensure a growing impact within the rheumatology community, which includes the wider population of patients, politicians and the press.

Linking to this, in the last few years, we as a community have also seen a rise in journal spam [1], with an almost daily barrage of article requests, editorial board invites and invited speakershios to conferences in far-flung places—some of which are not legitimate and would confuse those not completely familiar with established reputable journals and publishing houses and societies. This trend will likely remain, and one of the challenges as an editorial team is to continue to provide you with quality research that is impactful and relevant, and that leads to better patient care. We will aim to do this by choosing quality that will be obvious to the readership and will clearly relate to our community, and we will ensure that content is publicized in appropriate areas. We hope to be able to learn and understand what it is that the rheumatology community wants to know and make sure that our papers cover the vital topics with the most impact.

Impact itself is also changing with the advent of Altmetric, which measures the live usage and mentions on Twitter, blogs, press citations and readers on Mendeley, among other sources. This is reflective of the world around us, in which more information is disseminated using these online social media platforms and papers are publicized more frequently on Twitter. This will no doubt continue, and we will try to keep abreast of developments and make certain that newsworthy articles are well publicized online. The image of a print-only journal in a physical library is one that is anachronistic; readers expect to be able to access journals instantly and in a timely way. This will develop and in the future, it is not impossible to imagine that we will have large virtual libraries of journals. The challenge for us then is to ensure our global presence on these platforms is maintained. The new Oxford University Press platform’s improved search engine optimization is now making this much easier and our papers are now much more visible.

Our reviewers are also changing, with the increased use of ORCID iDs and the adoption of Publons as a method of rewarding and acknowledging our reviewers. We realize that having well reviewed, fair, yet quick decisions on manuscripts is important as well, for both our authors and for our reviewers and wider community, so that key content is published online as soon as possible.

Another challenge is attracting new emerging research groups; there has been an increase in clinical research coming from the near and far east and the antipodes, and we will be looking to attract quality papers to bring to your attention. Our readership is also high in North America, yet our submissions are mostly from Europe, so we will be looking at strategies to redress some of that imbalance and ensure we have a truly global outlook.

Our challenges for the future will encompass all of these areas, and we will keep you informed of our progress through the Journal, on Twitter and through our global news online feature. I am optimistic that we will deliver another informative five years of content and progress, with input from all the team here at Rheumatology. May the Journal always be with you on your individual journeys.

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