Foreword

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Welcome to the 16th volume of *Future Microbiology*

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To our readers, we would like to wish you a very happy New Year from all of us here at Future Medicine and introduce you to the 16th volume of *Future Microbiology*.

This foreword presents some of our content highlights from 2020, covering a range of article types from Reviews and Case Series to Editorials and Commentaries.

Content highlights

Volume 15 of *Future Microbiology* saw an influx of articles surrounding SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19, with some of the most read articles of the year addressing this topic. This year, the journal published a range of interesting research and opinion-based pieces from the experts in the field.

At the time of writing (December 2020), our most read, and the top-scoring article on Altmetric in 2020, was a Commentary entitled 'N-acetylcysteine as a potential treatment for COVID-19' written by Jorge-Aarón and Rosa-Ester [1]. The authors discuss evidence surrounding the capabilities of N-acetylcysteine and propose the use of N-acetylcysteine as a potential treatment, preventive and/or adjuvant against SARS-CoV-2.

The second highest-read article was an Editorial piece entitled '*Candida* species in the urinary tract: is it a fungal infection or not?' [2]. Vanessa Dias outlines how the presence of *Candida* species in the urine is a diagnostic challenge, as it can indicate several different conditions, such as colonization, UTI or even candidemia. Dias proposes that careful clinical evaluation can sometimes eliminate the need for antifungal treatment.

In our most read Review article of the year, Kordzadeh-Kermani *et al.* provide an informative round up of the pathogenesis, clinical manifestations and complications of COVID-19, from recently published literature [3]. They found that apart from the respiratory system, the cardiovascular, liver, kidneys, gastrointestinal and CNS are involved with different frequencies and degrees of severity.

Another highly popular paper was a Vaccine Evaluation entitled 'Safety, immunogenicity and risk-benefit analysis of rVSV-ΔG-ZEBOV-GP (V920) Ebola vaccine in Phase I–III clinical trials across regions' conducted by Bache *et al.* [4]. In this piece, the authors reviewed data from rVSV-ΔG-ZEBOV-GP clinical trials and concluded that so far, the vaccine displays good safety, immunogenicity and risk–benefit balance.

Volume 15's most popular Case Series was written by Sun *et al.* who noticed that SARS-CoV-2 detection was positive in anal swabs but negative in throat and sputum swabs of a few discharged patients [5]. They propose that anal swabs might be the optimal specimen for evaluating hospital discharge of COVID-19 patients.

Readership demographics

It is always interesting to consider the demography of our content's impact, as it continues to change with the increasing growth of *Future Microbiology*. At 34%, North America represents our largest readership proportion this year (Figure 1). Our content was next most read in Asia (31%) and Europe (23%). We hope to see the global reach of *Future Microbiology* grow further in 2021.

Figure 1. *Future Microbiology* readership demographics 2020.

Top Altmetric articles

We have been working with Altmetric since 2015 to help visualize where the articles we publish are having online impact. A special mention goes out to this year's top three articles, which all scored in the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric, in *Future Microbiology*.

- As mentioned earlier, the highest scoring piece was a Commentary entitled 'N-acetylcysteine as a potential treatment for COVID-19' written by Jorge-Aarón and Rosa-Ester [1];
- An Editorial entitled 'Phages in the fight against COVID-19?' [6] was in at second. In the piece, Górski *et al.* propose that further studies on the potential of phage therapy against SARS-CoV-2 are warranted;
- Finally, a persuasive Editorial article entitled 'COVID-19: in the absence of vaccination – 'mask the nation' came third [7]. Here, Sleator *et al.* support public health guidelines on universal mask-wearing and bring attention to the most effective household materials for DIY mask fabrication.

Social media

Readers can follow the latest *Future Microbiology* updates on Twitter (@fsgfmb) [8] and our Microbiology LinkedIn group [9]. Across these platforms, we discuss the most recent research in the field of microbiology, and the latest news, journal highlights and the newly published articles.

Through Twitter, we shared the first ever Tweetable Abstract across the Future Medicine journals, which summarized the key message of a Commentary entitled 'SARS-CoV-2 transmission, the ambiguous role of children and considerations for the reopening of schools in the fall' [10].

Through these mediums, we hope to engage more with our readers and experts in the field in the coming year.

Infectious Diseases Hub

Future Microbiology is proudly partnered with Infectious Diseases Hub [11], a free-access online resource that provides a platform to allow quick access to the latest, essential research to its members on all aspects of virology and microbiology, from the bench to the bedside. Breaking news, exclusive features, interviews, peer-reviewed articles and more are covered in Infectious Diseases Hub, provided by Future Science Group [12]. One example of our collaboration was a 'peek behind the paper' piece on CRISPR technology in pathogenic fungi with lead author, Elvira Román [13,14]. The full Review was offered as free access to all members of Infectious Disease Hub, in addition to this exclusive interview where the advances CRISPR technology has already brought to this field and how it could be optimized further, are discussed. This affiliation has allowed the content of *Future Microbiology* to have wider global reach and increased dissemination and influence through a multitude of different platforms.

Editorial Board

The team at *Future Microbiology* would like to give a special mention to our Editorial Board members for their continued assistance and contributions to the journal. In 2020, we welcomed a new member, Sahil Khanna, MBBS, a Professor of Medicine at Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and the head of the Comprehensive Gastroenterology Interest Group within the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Mayo Clinic, Rochester (MN, USA). Dr Khanna has a strong background in epidemiology, patient outcomes and emerging therapeutics for *Clostridium difficile* infection and will certainly make a valuable addition to the Editorial Board.

Conclusion

As always, any feedback the microbiology community wishes to share is appreciated, whether this be recommendations of up-and-coming areas you think deserve coverage or advice on the future direction of our content, corresponding to changing directions in the field. We welcome unsolicited Research, Review, Editorial and opinion article proposals, among others, and would be delighted to hear from you if you are interested in submitting to the journal.

I would like to conclude with a thank you to our readers, esteemed Editorial Board, peer reviewers and contributing authors for their continued support. We look forward to working with you all in the forthcoming year!

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