Welcome to the 16th volume of *Future Virology*

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“The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted an outstanding worldwide response from the research community, with various aspects and implications of the disease being investigated, from therapeutics to public health policy. In the past year, *Future Virology* saw a high number of submissions surrounding a range of aspects of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19.”

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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 Virology*. This foreword presents some of our content highlights from 2020, covering a range of article types from Commentaries to Special Reports.

Content highlights

2020 was a successful and packed year for *Future Virology*. The journal fulfilled its purpose by publishing exciting current research and opinion-based pieces from experts in the field. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted an outstanding worldwide response from the research community, with various aspects and implications of the disease being investigated, from therapeutics to public health policy. In the past year, *Future Virology* saw a high number of submissions surrounding a range of aspects of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. To create a useful resource for researchers and clinicians, we compiled a small selection of these articles into a Special Focus issue entitled ‘COVID-19: studying the global pandemic’ [1].

One of the articles from the Special Focus Issue, and the top read article at the time of writing (December 2020), was a Short Communication article entitled ‘The divergence between SARS-CoV-2 and RaTG13 might be overestimated due to the extensive RNA modification’ [2]. In this piece, Li *et al.* discussed evidence surrounding the origins of SARS-CoV-2 and aimed to assess the divergence between SARS-CoV-2 and RaTG13, a coronavirus found in bats.

Our second most read article was a Review by Fani *et al.* [3]. The authors compared the etiology of SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV with that of SARS-CoV-2. They also discussed treatments that have been useful against SARS and MERS, to gauge whether they could also be applied to the treatment of COVID-19.

Another popular Review article, written by Waters *et al.* was the third most read article of the year [4]. In this piece, Waters *et al.* discussed the immunological interaction between HIV-1 and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and proposed that ‘latent’ *M. tuberculosis* infection may have considerable impact on HIV-1 pathogenesis.

The most read Special Report entitled ‘Transmission and clinical characteristics of asymptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection’, was written by Tan *et al.* [5]. Here, the authors gave an overview of the transmission characteristics and clinical features of asymptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection and outlined the methods for identification of such patients.

The final article to mention is the most read Commentary of the year, authored by a member of our Editorial Board, Brian Conway, and his team. The piece entitled ‘COVID-19 in homeless populations: unique challenges and opportunities’ brings awareness to how essential daily services provided to those afflicted by homelessness and

Figure 1. *Future Virology* readership demographic 2020.

other issues, faced disruption during the pandemic [6]. The authors proposed an action plan for helping homeless and unstably housed populations during this challenging time.

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 Virology*. At 42%, North America represents our largest readership proportion this year (Figure 1). Our content was next most read in Asia (29%) and Europe (19%). With a wealth of compelling research to come and with the continued expansion of the field, we hope to see the global reach of *Future Virology* grow further in 2021.

Future Virology on Altmetric in 2020

We have been working with Altmetric since 2015 to help visualize where the articles we publish are having an impact online. Altmetric collates information from several platforms such as news outlets, Twitter and Mendeley to create an Attention Score. A special mention goes to this year's top article, 'Transmission and clinical characteristics of asymptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection' by Tan *et al.* [5] which scored in the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric, in *Future Virology*. Another highly scoring article was 'The divergence between SARS-CoV-2 and RaTG13 might be overestimated due to the extensive RNA modification' written by Li *et al.* [2].

Social media

Readers can follow the latest *Future Virology* updates on Twitter (@fsgfmb) [7] and our Microbiology LinkedIn group [8]. Across these platforms we consider forthcoming research in the field of virology, as well as current news, journal highlights and newly published articles. Through these mediums, we hope to engage more with our readers and experts in the field in the coming year.

Infectious Diseases Hub

Future Virology is proudly partnered with Infectious Diseases Hub [9], a free online resource that provides 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 [10].

One standout example of our partnership was the In Focus item on our Special Focus Issue 'COVID-19: studying the global pandemic' [11]. The feature included several 'Peek Behind the Paper' pieces, such as this exclusive interview

with Wenqing Jiang on the application of evolutionary theories to SARS-CoV-2 [12,13], as well as article highlights and related news.

Editorial Board

The team at *Future Virology* would like to give a special mention to our Editorial Board members for their continued assistance and contribution to the journal. In 2020, Stefano Rusconi and Hayden Frederick worked together as Guest Editors, to write the Foreword for the Special Focus Issue. In the foreword, they reflect on the key messages from each article and provide an informative introduction to the issue [14].

Conclusion

As always, any feedback that the virology 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. We welcome unsolicited Research, Review, Editorial and other 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 new year!

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