

Will 2021 be the year of the triumph of science?

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*Quelli che s'innamoran di pratica senza scienza
son come 'l nocchier ch'entra in navilio senza timone
o bussola, che mai ha certezza dove si vada.*

(Those who fall in love with practice without science are like a helmsman who enters a ship without a rudder or compass, who is never sure where to go.)

Leonardo da Vinci, *Trattato della Pittura*

The year 2020 was unlike any other for science, in particular in terms of the amount and speed of research and publication in medical journals. *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine (Pol Arch Intern Med)* was no exception. As the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic progressed through the spring, many physicians and researchers were locked down in their houses and spent time on writing manuscripts. Fortunately, those were not just old articles pulled out of the bottom drawer yet well-written papers presenting novel findings. Moreover, the clinical consequences of the infection with a new coronavirus and treatment options needed to be understood, investigated, and described. *Pol Arch Intern Med* initiated fast-track processing of manuscripts related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), whose publication was free of charge. Thanks to the timely work of the reviewers of those submissions, we managed to quickly respond and provide detailed reviews within a few days. Accepted articles appeared online also within a few days. Some of the papers published in our journal achieved high scores (>60) according to the Altmetric Attention Score.

Both lockdown and new research contributed to the striking increase in the number of submitted manuscripts, which challenged the Editors of *Pol Arch Intern Med* and many of scientific journals in that difficult year. Compared with the first 6 months of 2019, we observed an increase by 34%, 56%, and 103% in the number of submitted original articles, research letters, and clinical images, respectively. Even in the last 6 months of 2020, the increase was still noted as compared

with 2019, with the corresponding values of 8%, 57%, and 28%, respectively. Papers on COVID-19 were scarce, but most of them dealt with various aspects of internal medicine.

Despite much more challenging working environments, we managed to maintain the duration and quality of our peer review process. During the last 6 months, the average time from submission to the first decision was 2.5 days, and from submission to first reviews, 20 days. For most authors and reviewers, it was a difficult task and a significant achievement, as at the same time they were fighting all day on the front lines against the pandemic. Therefore, all of them should be acknowledged with deepest thanks and admiration.

Similar situations occurred in most of biomedical journals. Never before had the international scientific community turned towards a single disease in such a coordinated fashion. Those efforts resulted in identifying the microorganism, developing rapid testing systems and vaccination strategies, and improving the treatment of the severely ill within just a few months.

Despite yearly increases in the number of articles published, the *Pol Arch Intern Med* impact factor will hold its spot above 3.0 (the predicted value based on the number of citations recorded until December 20, 2020 is already 2.84). This impact factor represents a marked improvement in standing from 2.0 in 2015. Moreover, at the time of writing, the total number of *Pol Arch Intern Med* page views in 2020 was 134 000 and we gathered an overall Altmetric score of 430. Once again, we would like to extend appreciation to all who have contributed to keeping the journal on track through that unprecedented year.

Finally, we should acknowledge the devastating losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected all of us, including the community of authors, reviewers, readers, and editors. During that time, we had to provide care not only to patients but also to our severely ill relatives. We will never forget family members, friends, and colleagues who we lost prematurely in 2020.

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With this, the Editors of *Pol Arch Intern Med* would like to wish you a peaceful end of the turbulent 2020. We hope you will stay healthy and have a more predictable and happy year 2021.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

CONFLICT OF INTEREST None declared.

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