



A note from the Editor

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The current issue of *Clinical Rheumatology* represents my last as Editor-in-Chief. It has been 5 years since I assumed the position and I leave the journal with a great deal of gratitude for being granted the extraordinary opportunity of running the helm. I leave with no regrets and am highly satisfied for having achieved the goals that were set for us at the outset [1]. Our main goal was always to maintain the high academic standards for which the journal is known for, and I do believe that we have been able to do so by publishing sound, innovative, and well-structured original articles of practical interest and application to our international rheumatology community. In doing so, we have been fair, impartial, and able to maintain the integrity of the editorial policies of the journal.

As I reflect on what has transpired during our 5-year term, I would like to emphasize these points: first, the number of submissions has had an unprecedented growth of 60%, from 817 submissions received at the end of Dr. Paul Davis' final year as EIC (2013) to a projected total submission of 1400 in 2018.

A major achievement of our editorial team has been to maintain a strong impact factor and ranking among top journals of our specialty. Nevertheless, the impact factor was never the primary focus in the way CLRH was operated. Our editorial team always considered the IF to be secondary to CLRH's primary purpose, which is to support ILAR's mission of advancing the practice and education of rheumatology worldwide. We strongly relied on the strength of individual articles, as well as direct feedback from Editorial Board members and reviewers.

The journal has enjoyed a series of new heights during the past 2 years: the 2016 IF was the highest in the journal's history at 2.365, followed by its second highest IF in 2017 at 2.141. This rise in IF was achieved even whilst the article output rose, a testament to the journal's focus of publishing high-quality research, with no upper limit on how many

papers this lead to. Similarly, the Google Scholar h5 Index ranks CLRH 13th in the field of Rheumatology. The quality and impact of CLRH's papers is also shown through the number of article downloads received by the journal; there has been close to a 100% increase in online usage from the 236,000 articles downloads in 2014, to the 471,000 received in 2017.

Whilst CLRH is not able to return a positive editorial decision to all authors, it has aimed to provide authors with a decision in a timely fashion. The turnaround time from submission to first editorial decision has been reduced from 32 days in 2014, to 25 days in 2018. Similarly, authors of accepted papers will find their article available Online First (in its final, fully citable form) within 13 days of acceptance.

Special thanks to our Associate and Editorial Board members and reviewers who committed precious time to provide timely and thorough reviews on a consistent basis. In addition, the support provided by the SPRINGER staff deserves special recognition. To this regard, Ben Bishop, Editor *Clinical Research Journals*, provided invaluable assistance as well as Wendy Pontefract, which allows smooth production and dissemination of CLRH.

Sincerely,

Luis R. Espinoza, M.D.
Editor-in-Chief
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Reference

1. Espinoza LR (2013) *Clinical rheumatology: building on past success*. *Clin Rheumatol* 33:1

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