

EDITORIAL



And once the storm is over... ICM will remain the intensivist's beacon

Giuseppe Citerio*  on behalf of the ICM Editorial Board

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While the pandemic is still raging in many countries [1], the vaccination programs rolling out are cause of hope and offer some perspective as we inch towards the end of this nightmare. The intensive care community has found itself on the frontline in this pandemic year. Meanwhile, intensive care medicine (ICM) has thrived to support critical care professionals by keeping them updated [2–4], and by discussing how intensive care units (ICUs) of the future [5]—as well as our research models [6–8]—need reform after this pandemic. ICM has also served as a forum for communicating emotions and experiences, in the “*From the inside*” section [9, 10].

This year has also been challenging for ICM [11, 12]. The number of submissions increased by 75% (3214), with a peak between March and May, and the number of published manuscripts by 18% (455). The ICM editorial board and the ICM editorial office have been under great pressure but this reinforced our commitment. The average time from submission to first decision decreased from 10 to 6 days and, for accepted manuscripts, the interval from acceptance to publication was reduced from 51 to 42 days. We never bypassed the high-standard ICM evaluation process, with an early in-house evaluation by two–three editors followed by an external peer-review process. All the accepted manuscripts related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which would usually have gone online first within two weeks from acceptance, have been made available in 24 h on the website of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM). An impressive number of articles have been downloaded from the journal's website, more than five million (+250% vs. 2019),

demonstrating a worldwide interest in our journal. In the meantime, ICM has further bolstered its relationship with ESICM, by promoting the joint development of guidelines useful at the bedside. As of today, four guidelines are already in the pipeline, on fluid therapy in the ICU, echography head to toe, ARDS definition and treatment, and practical antibiotic stewardship. We plan to publish these guidelines in the second part of 2021, along with a renewed plan for ICM rapid practical guidelines [13]. Finally, ICM has invited as Guest Editor for 2021 a colleague from China who has been involved in the early management of the pandemic. Welcome to Professor Haibo Qiu!

These achievements would not have been possible without our valued reviewers. ICM invited more than 4800 reviewers in 2020 and most of them completed their reviews in fewer than 8 days. The Journal applied for EU CME credits for all reviewers as a gesture of recognition. Several reviewers were themselves ill with COVID-19, which makes us even more grateful and proud for their high-valued work. Kudos to all the reviewers listed at the end of this manuscript.

As Haruki Murakami wrote in his novel “Kafka on the Shore” “... *once the storm is over... you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about.*”

ICM will continue to strive for excellence and to serve as a beacon in the storm for the intensive care community.

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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Received: 27 March 2021 Accepted: 3 April 2021

Published online: 28 April 2021

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