



Editorial: Advancing Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology: Introducing a New Editorial Team and Initiatives

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In January 2023, I have the honor of beginning a 5-year-term as editor-in-chief (EIC) of *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology* (RCAP), having handled new submissions as incoming editor in 2022 and serving as an Associate Editor for the past five years. RCAP is the official journal of the International Society for Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology (ISRCAP). One of the many wonderful things about RCAP is that it is a truly international journal. For this commentary I pulled 2022 data (January - August). During this period of time, RCAP received $N=314$ new submissions, of which only 37% were from the United States, with submissions originating from $N=40$ different countries! As EIC, I want to see this trend continue and grow, as part of being a journal that values diversity and inclusion is ensuring that diverse perspectives and training backgrounds are represented in science.

RCAP has an impressive history of editorship, starting with Herb Quay, the founding editor of the journal, followed by Don Routh, Sue Campbell, John Lochman, Charlotte Johnston, and most recently Paul Frick. Dr. Paul Frick who served as EIC for the past 5 years had the vision and leadership needed to change the journal name from *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, removing the term “abnormal”. Changing a journal name is a difficult decision as doing so negatively impacts the impact factor. However, we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback and are grateful for the support. As a leading international journal in the field of child/adolescent psychopathology, RCAP has witnessed a significant increase in manuscript submissions per year. As such, RCAP and Springer agreed to move from publishing 8 issues per year to publishing 12. This places RCAP in a select group of psychology journals that disseminate

science on a monthly basis and makes RCAP one of the top journals in Clinical Psychology in terms for number citations per year. I want to thank Dr. Frick for leading these efforts and modeling how an EIC can be both passionate about high impact science and thoughtful and balanced with the peer review process.

As EIC, one of my first tasks was to assemble a group of highly respected scientists to serve as Associate Editors and on the Editorial Board. This is an important and meaningful responsibility because it is one-way journals can demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion. I am incredibly fortunate that Esther Calvete, University of Deusto, Jeffrey D. Burke, University of Connecticut, Cynthia Huang-Pollock, Pennsylvania State University, Eva Kimonis, University of New South Wales, Cynthia Suveg, University of Georgia, NiCole Buchanan, Michigan State University, and Benjamin Yerys, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia agreed to serve as Associate Editors. In 2022, they have already demonstrated a passion for making careful and balanced decisions and doing so as quickly as possible. You can read more about each of the Associate Editors and their areas of expertise here - [RCAP Associate Editors](#).

RCAP cannot be a leading journal in the field without a dedicated and committed editorial board. I want readers of RCAP to know that being on the RCAP editorial board really means something. An RCAP editorial board appointment means that you have a national reputation in your field of research *and* that you actively review for RCAP, accepting more than declining. There are no names on the RCAP editorial board list because they are “big names” in science that carry prestige unless they frequently agree to review. One of my first tasks as EIC was to review 5-year data from the editorial board. Those who didn’t actively review were removed and I invited a diverse new group of editorial board members. Of the 13 new board members, 10 are women and multiple underrepresented backgrounds in science are represented. Setting a high and meaningful bar for being on the

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editorial board means that RCAP Associate Editors rarely have to look beyond the board for reviews and expertise. If you submit to RCAP you can be confident that you are getting reviewers who are committed to the journal and understand the importance of peer review.

One of my goals as EIC is to ensure that manuscripts are reviewed in a timely manner. I see it as fairly straightforward, we either believe that science is important and needs to be disseminated quickly, or it is not important, and it is OK for the review process to be slow. In 2022, for the manuscripts the incoming team handled, time to first decision was 43 days. One way I have sought to shorten the peer review process is by having the team thoroughly screen all incoming manuscripts and desk reject if the manuscript is not a good fit for the journal or there is low likelihood of publication. In 2022, we increased the number new manuscript submissions in this category. Importantly, when a manuscript is desk rejected, authors receive an explanation of the rationale for the decision. The RCAP team wants authors to understand the type of research the journal publishes and the methodological strengths necessary for publication. The goal is to provide authors with rapid feedback so that they can consider alternate journals and disseminate their work in the most appropriate venue. We are also rapidly ramping up the ways in which we disseminate research findings. RCAP recently established a Twitter account (@RCAP_Editor) where we will summarize and highlight the impact of select publications for a broad audience. We will also interview authors about their research and publish those interviews on the website.

In closing, I want to note that in 2022 our team approved three special issues. “Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): A Developmental Psychopathology Perspective. “Novel Insights into the Externalizing Psychopathology Spectrum in Childhood and Adolescence from Intensive Longitudinal Data” and “Clinical Psychology in the Era of Research Diagnostic Criteria (RDoC): Reconciling Individually-Focused Practice with a Broader Biopsychosocial

Context.” You can read more about them here - [RCAP Special Issues](#). I would like to see RCAP increase the number of special issues published for two reasons. First, it has become increasingly difficult to keep up with the scientific literature, with journals publishing thousands of articles each month. Special issues are a good way to bring together the most novel and impactful research on a particular topic in one place. Hopefully, this allows researchers to utilize special issues to guide their own programs of research. Second, for special issues at RCAP we use a multi-stage review, beginning with a letter of intent. Using the letter of intent process helps to ensure that only manuscripts that meet the RCAP high impact threshold end up getting submitted to the special issue; saving authors and reviewers time and effort.

If you have any questions about RCAP, please email me. I recall that as a postdoctoral fellow and assistant professor, the journal management and peer review process was a bit of a mystery. I wanted to contribute to peer review, but wasn't getting sent manuscripts and didn't know what to do about that. Later, I wanted to serve on editorial boards for the leading journals in my field, to support them and selfishly, as an indicator of national reputation, but didn't know how to get on a board. This lack of information and transparency is problematic, because it leads to inequities in the peer review system and who is represented in science. My email is jl3079@gsapp.rutgers.edu and I welcome any and all questions and suggestions. If you want to review for RCAP, just ask. If you need mentorship on how to review we will provide it. If you want to be considered for the Editorial Board we can tell you exactly what we look for in making appointments. If you want to propose a special issue, we can provide you with prior successful examples. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead RCAP and will do my best to ensure the continued growth and strong international reputation of the journal.

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