



Editorial 2021: A Year in Review

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This past year has been one of transition at the Journal. To begin, Lynn Kern Koegel, Clinical Professor at Stanford School of Medicine, is the new co-editor of the Journal. Lynn has been a JADD reviewer for many decades, and more recently an associate and senior editor. Over the coming years she looks forward to continuing to work with the distinguished group of scholars who serve as associate editors and board members. In addition to being a researcher in the field of autism for many decades, she is also the aunt of a child who was diagnosed with autism at age two-and-a-half. Although he used no spoken verbal words when diagnosed, he is now thriving as a teen. This personal experience has been both enlightening and educational for her. She looks forward to working with Fred Volkmar as he transitions out of his role as Editor over the next 2 years. As an editor for nearly 15 years Fred has seen the many changes in the field and the development of the truly inspirational research enterprise for which this Journal has been such a vital part.

Sadly, as was true last year any discussion of 2021 must acknowledge the impact of the COVID virus on all of us. The pandemic has had an important impact both on our clinical work as well as research. As joint editors we've had to cope with many reviewers who were unable to review papers and are particularly grateful to those colleagues' who could, in the face of covid, still participate. We have also lost colleagues, friends, and family members. The passing of Professor Sir Michael Rutter, a giant in the field, has been a singular sad event this past year.

Authors have been able, in the face of covid, to continue working and over 1400 papers were received last year. Of these slightly more than one third were eventually accepted,

typically after at least one revision. It remains rare (perhaps 1% of papers) for a paper to be accepted without some revision. On average the turnaround time once a paper is in proper form and can enter the formal review process is a remarkably speedy 18 days. It is important to keep in mind that this is an average and some papers can take much longer to review and that sometimes papers go back to authors one or more times for author revision before they enter the review process. The fast turnaround time is thanks to the efforts of the staff of the Journal office, Lori Klein, and Monica Mleczek, who quickly examine all papers for conformance to basic Journal style and return them for revision before they are assigned to the Editors for review. Both of us are increasingly aware of the pressure of limited Journal space so that most review articles are now routinely referred to our companion journal; Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders (RJADD). We also sometimes reject and return articles quickly if we feel that won't make it through the peer review process. We are, of course, always mindful that the latter is not always perfect, but it is what we have to ensure quality. Apart from editorials and book reviews, all papers in the Journal go through a rigorous double-anonymous review process. We also remind authors, again, that the very, very fast pace of publication (sometimes only a few days once an article has been accepted) means that any errors within text will be published as well and we regret the rise in errata publications that reflect the rapidity of this process and the importance for authors to be certain that papers submitted are in final form. In the future we will try to even more rigorously screen papers so that all the required elements are there before the paper goes out for review. We also encourage authors to use the option of online publication of supplementary material as "Extra Supplementary Material" (ESM); this saves valuable Journal space while providing authors with the opportunity to give readers important ancillary material.

We remind authors that duplicate publication is not allowed, and authors certify this to us as part of the submission process along with ethical research conduct and so

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forth. Springer Nature is a member of COPE, the Committee on Publication Ethics, and the COPE guidelines are followed for all research integrity issues that come up in relation to JADD articles both under review and published.

We continue to see submissions of scholarly papers from around the world. This past year we received papers from 68 countries. We appreciate the increased interest and scholarship in developing countries as well as those with more established research and clinical enterprises. We are pleased to note that our impact factor rose to 4.3 last year, which is excellent, especially given that JADD is a specialty journal.

We encourage special issues of topics of interest to our readership. This past year we had a special celebrating the 40th anniversary of autism's first official recognition in the DSM-III, as well as special section on Early Detection in Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The Journal continues to expand its editorial board and add Associate Editors as members rotate on and off. We bid farewell to several Associate editors who provided very valuable service to the Journal over the years: Christopher J. McDougle, M.D., James C. McPartland, Ph.D., and Gerrit Ian Van Schalkwyk, M.D.

The *Journal* is deeply grateful for the continued dedication of the remaining Associate Editors: Alice S. Carter, Ph.D., Craig A. Erickson, M.D., Carla Mazefsky, Ph.D., Patricia A. Prelock, Ph.D., Brian Reichow, Ph.D., Shafali Spurling Jeste, M.D., Hanna Stevens, M.D., Ph.D., Giacomo Vivanti, Ph.D., and Marc Woodbury-Smith, PhD, MRC Psych. We welcome the following new associate editors: Mark J. Brosnan, Ph.D., Steve Camarata, Ph.D., Lawrence Fung, M.D., Ph.D., and Matthew D. Lerner, Ph.D.

The associate editors, office staff and we also extend our very best wishes and many thanks to *Jennifer Hadley as Senior Editor and Soren Malpass, Editorial Assistant at Springer.*

In the Journal office we wish to thank Lori Klein, Editorial Manager, Monica Mleczek and Lizzie Ponder, Editorial Assistants, who not only work tirelessly with authors and reviewers to assist with the submission process, but they also work diligently to ensure that every submission conforms to *JADD* standards before it enters peer review, thereby streamlining the process for the Editor and Associate Editors.

In the upcoming year we will be working on many projects, including developing suggestions for inclusive language as well as providing guidelines for the types of high-quality research that are likely to be favorably reviewed for publication in *JADD*. Both terminology and standards change over time, and the *JADD* editors and editorial board who have been working to improve the quality of life for individuals on the autism spectrum, wish to be both inclusive and sensitive. We feel that this, in turn, promotes a more just and inclusive humankind.

Listed in the following section are the names of the individuals who have contributed one or more reviews to the *Journal* this year. We apologize if we have missed anyone! Again, although far from perfect, peer review remains the most effective way for the field to ensure the quality of the scholarly product. *JADD* thanks these individuals for their hard work and dedication.

Fred R. Volkmar, M.D. and Lynn Kern Koegel, Ph.D.
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