Editorial note

María José Alonso¹

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My third year as editor-in-chief of the *DDTR* journal has started. Needless to say, 2020 was a devastating year for humanity. None of us has ever been confronted with such a challenging global situation. How has this impacted on our science and also on how we communicate science? We could say that the impact has been negative as many of our labs have been closed down for a number of months and, in many cases, experiments had to be interrupted abruptly. However, we all know our brains have been more active, and probably, more creative than ever. Many scientists were able to re-orient their research and focus on the COVID problem, while others, like myself and so many others around the globe working on infectious diseases and vaccine delivery, have felt intensely the need to dedicate unprecedented efforts to confront a health problem that affects all humankind.

In my view, from the communication and science transparency perspective, there has been an immense and highly positive effort to open our hearts and minds not only to the scientific community but also to the general public. I believe this pandemic has had a tremendous impact on people's perception of science. Although the value of science has been recognized for centuries, there are countries who have thought they were not rich enough to make significant investments in science. While this may be true for some countries, the rest of the world has the moral obligation to help them deal with the problem globally. On the other hand, in healthier wealthier countries, society has realized that public/private investment in science and technology is the only way to make our way into the future.

Transparency and private–public collaboration have been critical for the successful development of COVID vaccines and treatments. However, we have also entered a period in which pseudo-science and miscommunication have taken

an unexpected hold, especially among less knowledgeable people. Here is where scientists have an important responsibility: now more than ever we must hold ourselves to the highest possible standard in terms of the rigor and soundness of the science we disseminate.

Our “motto” at *DDTR* has always been “quality and applicability”. We must ensure the science and technology covered in the journal pose potential to be translated to addressing real-life problems related to health, care and well-being. They can be ultimately translated only if they are robust and clearly aimed at specific needs.

Our editors at *DDTR*, being highly attuned to the dramatic reality of the COVID pandemic we are living, have encouraged researchers to disseminate knowledge and experimental data related to infectious diseases. We are convinced that more information is needed in these specific areas, and the scientific global community is responding to this critical need.

In line with this, we are preparing a “Double Special Issue” dedicated to drug delivery and infectious disease from Western and Eastern perspectives. Claus-Michael Lehr, Brigitta Loretz, and Sara Hudson are guest editors for the Western Issue, while Yu-Kyoung Oh and Zhen Gu are the contributors providing the Eastern perspective. The announcement of this Special Issue will come soon. In the meantime, some of the articles to be included in this special issue are being published online.

DDTR Special issues

In the context of this alarming situation, we must admit that 2020 was a positive year for the *DDTR* journal. Despite the pandemic, we have published 141 articles distributed in 6 issues, two of which were Special Issues organized by special groups of the Controlled Release Society, while another was organized by the International Society of Microencapsulation:

The Focus Group of Nanomedicine of the Controlled Release Society, edited by Bruno Sarmiento and Steve Little,

✉ María José Alonso
mariaj.alonso@usc.es

¹ CIMUS Research Institute, University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

published an outstanding collection of articles in the field of nanomedicine:

Fundamentals of Nanomedicines Towards Clinical Translation. Guest Editors: Bruno Sarmiento and Steve Little (<https://link.springer.com/journal/13346/volumes-and-issues/10-3>).

The Indian Local Chapter of the Controlled Release Society, under the leadership of Avi Schroder, Vandana Patravale, Parizad Elchidana, as Guest Editors published *Drug Delivery Systems: From Basic Science Towards Clinical Translation* (<https://link.springer.com/journal/13346/volumes-and-issues/10-4>).

The International Society of Microencapsulation, represented by Bruno Sarmiento and Fabio Rocha Formiga published *Emerging Trends in Nano- and Microencapsulation Science*.

(<https://link.springer.com/journal/13346/volumes-and-issues/10-6>).

DDTR Inspirational notes

“Inspirational Notes”, which are intended to provide an easy-to-read view of relevant concepts, ideas, and products, have received a great deal of attention in 2020. You can access these notes through a free link available at the CRS and Springer web pages. These Notes are:

- Jeff Hrkach and Robert Langer, *From micro to nano: evolution and impact of drug delivery in treating disease* (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-020-00769-6>).

This Note, which had more than 3,000 downloads, highlights the technological evolution of drug delivery from micro- to nano-, providing examples of approved medicines that demonstrate the significant impact of the drug delivery field in treating many diseases.

- John Townsend, Régine Sitruk-Ware, Saumya RamaRao, Jim Sailer, *Contraceptive technologies for global health: ethically getting to safe, effective and acceptable options for women and men* (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13346-020-00726-3>).

This Note has been downloaded 1,182 times and provides an overall vision of contraceptive technologies in global health.

- Marianne Ashford, *Drug delivery—the increasing momentum* (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-020-00858-6>).

In this Note, downloaded 774 times in the past 3 months, Dr. Ashford outlines how the field of drug delivery has evolved over the past decades, and shares skills, capabilities and behaviors instrumental and critical for the success of next-generation medicines.

DDTR Awarded papers

We are very pleased to have awarded so many papers in 2020. In each issue we selected the three best papers included, and a figure from the best paper was then selected as the cover for that specific Issue. The best papers of the 2020 issues were:

Convection-enhanced delivery of liposomal drugs for effective treatment of glioblastoma multiforme (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-020-00773-w>).

Local anesthesia enhanced with increasing high-frequency ultrasound intensity (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-020-00760-1>).

Supersaturated LFCS type III self-emulsifying delivery systems of sorafenib tosylate with improved biopharmaceutical performance (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-020-00772-x>).

In vivo efficacy of bevacizumab-loaded albumin nanoparticles in the treatment of colorectal cancer (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-020-00722-7>).

Translational studies of intravenous and intracerebroventricular routes of administration for CNS cellular biodistribution for BMN 250, an enzyme replacement therapy for the treatment of Sanfilippo type B (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-019-00683-6>).

Characterization of a liposomal copper(II)-quercetin formulation suitable for parenteral use (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-019-00674-7>).

CRS Awarded papers

During the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Controlled Release Society, 3 DDTR papers were awarded. We are very grateful to the CRS Focus Groups for their commitment to DDTR:

CRS Oral Drug Delivery Focus Group Paper of the Year, 2019 (Chair: Prof. Aaron Anselmo): Loratadine self-microemulsifying drug delivery systems (SMEDDS) in combination with sulforaphane for the synergistic chemoprevention of pancreatic cancer (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-019-00619-0>).

CRS Nanomedicine and Nanoscale Delivery Focus Group Paper of the Year, 2019 (Chair Prof. Helder Santos): Tumor growth inhibition by mSTEAP peptide nanovaccine inducing augmented CD8⁺ T cell immune responses (<https://www.springer.com/journal/13346/updates/17789014>).

2019 DDTR Best Paper of the Year: Depletion of collagen by losartan to improve tumor accumulation and therapeutic efficacy of photodynamic nanoplateforms (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13346-018-00610-1>).

Welcome to new members

In 2020 we have incorporated new editors and editorial board members. We have given our welcome to:

Dr. Andrew Lewis, Ph.D. (Quotient Sciences, UK), Associate Editor of Inspirational Notes, who has brought to the journal new insights from the industrial perspective.

Dr. Tushar Kumeria, Ph.D. (University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia), Young Associate Director.

Hagar Labouta, Ph.D. (University of Manitoba, Canada) Young Associate Director.

The newly welcome Editorial Board members are:

Amirali Popat, University of Queensland, Australia.

San-Yuan Chen, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan.

Fenghua Meng, Soochow University, China.

Yeu-Chun Kim, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Korea.

Noriyasu Kamei, Kobe Gakuin University, Japan.

Carmen Alvarez-Lorenzo, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

The input of so many talented people and the new initiatives of the journal are expected to lead to an enhanced

Impact Factor of the Journal. My vision for the months to come is to continue to attract authors whose contributions will result in the recognition of *DDTR* as the journal of reference for the global drug delivery community.

We will continue to acknowledge the scientists working on drug delivery and infectious diseases by disseminating their work in *DDTR* as a way to contribute to the solution to this unprecedented crisis associated to a significant health challenge. I invite *DDTR* readers to submit articles in this field in order to accelerate the evaluation process and make the results available to the public in a shorter time frame.

Overall, from a personal perspective, working for *DDTR* has been a highly enriching experience, and I want to express my deepest gratitude to our outstanding team of editors and to our editorial board. I look forward to extending our contribution to the drug delivery field and, hence, to improve the health and wellbeing of all humankind.

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