



A sad anniversary, one year of COVID-19 epidemics—in this issue: from COVID-19 to membranous nephropathy

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One year ago, late one Sunday evening, a friend of mine called from Italy, and after managing to utter half a sentence “Northern Italy is collapsing”, he started repeating: “they are closing Lombardy, they are closing Lombardy, it’s a disaster,” and burst into tears.

Upon hearing this still handsome 60-year-old former scout and mountain climber who fears nothing crying like a child, I understood that we in France had only 2, at most 3 weeks left, before the catastrophe reached us. The following weeks were a nightmare; like many Italians living abroad, we saw our wealthy industrialized northern regions collapsing, and we had a hard time explaining what was going on. In many countries the disaster was initially scotomized, until, among others a wonderful paper in the NEJM explained to the medical community what Lombardy meant for Italy, and how the Bergamo hospital, which had been a pearl, a referral center, was now reduced to a Dantesque inferno [1]. Some months later, our head intensivist told me he had warned the hospitals in his network that something serious was about to happen. “I understood that something was coming,” he said, “because you were so sad. I’d never seen you like that and I thought that even if I didn’t know what was happening, if you were that sad, it had to be something terrible”.

These flashes of memory, and many other episodes we all can recall, take us back a long time, but it was only 1 year ago that everything changed. Now, after there have been two million deaths in the world, over 100,000 of them in Italy, and when several European countries are locking up again, it may be time for a first reflection on the impact the SARS-CoV-2 epidemics have had on our journals.

At the very beginning of the epidemics, some of us expected a reduction in the number of submitted papers. The opposite happened. The number of papers submitted to

the Journal of Nephrology increased from about 800 in 2019 to over 1400 in 2020, and a similar increase was observed by many sister journals in our discipline. However, only a minority of the articles concerned COVID-19. In the beginning, some of us thought that we were seeing a temporary effect of the lock-down: more time to work, no traveling, fewer distractions, so time to open our desk drawers and have a look at forgotten papers. We were sure that once a few months had passed and the drawers were empty again, we would observe a decrease in submissions. A year ago, most of us thought, or at least deeply hoped, that there would soon be no need to still be writing about COVID-19 and wondered how much space we should allocate to this topic in our specialized journals. Once more, we were wrong.

This issue, 1 year later, has two main focuses: COVID-19 in nephrology and nephrology without COVID-19.

Fourteen papers concern COVID-19. They include three editorial reflections, one of them on the lesson we can learn about the prevention of infections of the vascular access from the precautions imposed since the start of the epidemic; one point of view from the ERA-EDTA working group on the importance of maintaining our network of vascular access care; two lessons for the clinical nephrologist, presenting cases that should make us reflect on the protean nature of this disease; and ten original papers, on various issues, from AKI to epidemiology, dialysis and quality of life. The resilience of dialysis patients is reported as a way to reinvest what they have learned living with a kidney disease into something that can help them face these hard times.

Nephrology lives on.

The editorial on World Kidney Day is being published in this issue.

We are proud to provide space to a variety of dialysis-related questions: a proposal for a new equation for emerging incremental dialysis, starting from once-weekly schedules; an analysis of hand function assessment in peritoneal dialysis. We include papers on rare diseases and lupus nephropathy; a review of the neurologic effects of immunosuppression

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Fig. 1 Italian newspapers on Vaccines; the poems of the Nobel laureate Montale for a Sunday edition in February 2021. On the cover of *Le Monde* "Le bilan du monde" a picture of Martina Papponetti, nurse in the Hospital Humanitas Gavazzeni in Bergamo, after her shift (27 March, 2020)



after kidney transplantation; the open issue of mortality after restarting dialysis analyzed in a large Japanese cohort. However the star of this issue is membranous nephropathy.

Please enjoy reading about the studies on various populations, from adults in Italy to children in China, and about particular cases of this fascinating disease, which is not only a core disease in our discipline, but is also the first example of a kidney disease that we can track from the antigen to kidney deposits, as a brilliant editorial underlines.

Life does indeed go on, and the long list of manuscripts available online shows the vitality of our nephrology society.

But this is not all.

From the cover of “Le bilan du monde 2021”, a special issue published by *Le Monde*, the dark, tired eyes of an Italian nurse stare out at us from every newsstand in France (Fig. 1). The differences between countries, the initial attempt to minimize the “Italian flu”, are all behind us [2, 3]. What remains goes beyond borders.

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