EDITORIAL

JGH OPEN: a little ray of sunshine

The past two years have been difficult and challenging for gastroenterologists and hepatologists in most parts of the world. In particular, the epidemic of COVID-19 has resulted in substantial changes in behavior at both a personal and professional level. In relation to the latter, face-to-face consultations have been restricted, departmental meetings have often been cancelled, endoscopy lists have been restricted to urgent cases and hospital wards have either been closed or converted to the care of those with COVID-19 infections. In addition, clinical research activity has been halted or scaled back and most national and international meetings have been cancelled. Those of us who thought that 2022 might see a gradual return to normality are now faced with the prospect of continuing issues with the Omicron and perhaps other variants.

In the midst of this gloomy scenario, some good things have happened. Many physicians have become proficient at online consultation using various forms of telemedicine. This important development is likely to persist, particularly for patients with known disorders such as cirrhosis and inflammatory bowel disease where the additional information from physical examination is likely to be small. Telemedicine may also serve to refocus attention on the importance of medical history as a triage to more extensive investigations such as endoscopic procedures. An additional issue for some physicians is the opportunity to reassess lifestyle aspirations in the setting of lockdowns and disrupted clinical practices.

One effect of restrictions caused by COVID-19 has been an increase in the use of online activities. This seems likely to extend to professional activities related to gastroenterology and hepatology. Our aim as editors and publishers has been to create an online journal containing high-quality, peer-reviewed articles that appeal to both clinicians looking for educational information and to research personnel looking for developments in their area of interest. We have also tried to meet the needs of authors with timely review processes and a minimal gap between acceptance and online publication. In 2021, we changed from 2-monthly to monthly issues with between 13 and 30 articles in each issue including editorials, reviews, original articles and case reports. The number of submissions increased in 2021 when compared to 2020 along with submissions from an increasing number of countries and a pleasing increase in citations.

JGH Open now has an established role as a junior partner to the Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology [JGH]. Both journals are jointly owned by Wiley, an experienced and highly respected publisher, and the Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology Foundation [JGHF], a charitable foundation that supports conferences, educational and clinical activities in the Asia-Pacific region. We are grateful for the efforts of our Associate Editors, namely Vineet Ahuja [India], Lawrence Khek-Yu Ho [Singapore], Sanjiv Mahadeva [Malaysia], Zhihua Ran [China], Sachiyu Yoshio [Japan], Ajay Duseja [India], Jyh-Ming Liou [Taiwan], Yung Sheng Yang [China] and Yock Young Dan [Singapore]. Our usual Editor-in-Chief, Khean-Lee Goh, is currently on leave but, hopefully, will be able to resume the role in the near future. Finally, a special thank you to our authors and readers who choose JGH Open from a variety of other scientific and educational options.

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