

# Journal of Neurotrauma

Editor-in-Chief  
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September 2021

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Contributors:

It is a distinct honor to follow Dr. John Povlishock in his tradition of writing an annual letter about the state of the Journal. It's a pleasure to do so, because this has been a superb year for [Journal of Neurotrauma](#). The Journal has seen **more than 300,000 full-text manuscript downloads** thus far in 2021, a 42% increase over last year's numbers. Furthermore, the 2020 Journal **Impact Factor has gone up to: 5.269** (an increase of 30% over 2019). We are in the top quartile in both Neurosciences and Clinical Neurology. I encourage you to [recommend the Journal](#) to your library if it is not already in their collection.

We have a terrific group of new and continuing team members. These are the people who make the Journal great:

- Our all-star cast of Associate Editors has expanded to include **Drs. Guoyi Gao, Brad Harrington, Inga Koerte, Niklas Marklund, and Nikolaus Plesnila**. Fortunately, **Drs. Dalton Dietrich and Alex Valadka** remain in their roles as Deputy Editors; I'd like to publicly acknowledge what a wonderful job Dr. Valadka did serving as Editor-in-Chief this summer while I was away.
- We have a terrific team of new social media editors, **Drs. Adam Bachstetter, Holly Hinson, and David Loane**. As many of you know, social media promotions have become increasingly important in scientific communication and I encourage all of you to follow, share, and contribute to our communications in this domain. Our top social media platform is Twitter. Please take a look [@J\\_Neurotrauma](#)
- Most recently, **Sarah Andrus** has joined the team as the Executive Publisher. She brings a wealth of experience in scientific publishing, best practices for scientific transparency, and bibliometric analyses. It is an honor to work with her.
- Fortunately, **Jean Ann Sanford** has graciously agreed to continue as Managing Editor. I don't know what we'd do without her.

Just as important are our reviewers. I personally think that one of the greatest strengths of the Journal is our dedicated and reliable team of regular reviewers. At the July (virtual) Editorial Board meeting we gave awards to 5 individuals that have completed 15 reviews or more between July 2020 – June 2021: **Drs. Alex Valadka, Bruce Lyeth, Donald Marion, Claudia Robertson, and Douglas DeWitt**. We also gave awards to three for their extraordinary speed - under 4 days on average: **Drs. David Menon, Takeshi Maeda, and Adam Bachstetter**. Finally, we gave a special "Reviewer-as-Teacher" award to **Dr. Victor Volovici** for reviews that have helped our authors improve their statistical communication and statistical rigor. Bravo to all of them and to all of you who have reviewed for the Journal this year!

But far from resting on laurels, we have big plans for the rest of 2021 and beyond:

- 1) **A relentless drive to improve the quality and impact of the research in our field.** We are now accepting fewer total manuscripts at *Journal of Neurotrauma*, and are working closely with our sister publication, *Neurotrauma Reports*, in order to provide an appropriate forum for all high-quality publications in the field. The editorial team is working closely together with our editorial board members and specialized consultants to rapidly triage manuscripts.

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- 2) **A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.** We are proactively seeking to publish high-quality research from authors from underrepresented and historically disadvantaged backgrounds. Please continue to communicate with us about these factors in your cover letters.
- 3) **A renewed focus on speed.** Our ambitious goal is to return a first decision to the authors within 14 business days of initial submission for 95% of manuscripts. This means that we are making every effort to have decisions within 1 business day from our editorial board members about whether papers should go out for review, expect responses from potential reviewers within 1 business day, and expect a first editorial decision with reviews back within 10 business days. When time is of the essence, [send your best manuscripts](#) to *Journal of Neurotrauma*.
- 4) **Rigor and reproducibility will be assessed for every manuscript**, including careful attention to areas such as randomization, blinding, preregistered study designs, effect sizes, correction for multiple comparisons, and replication. Later this year, we will be disseminating draft checklists covering the important domains of rigor and reproducibility for your comments, and implementing these checklists in 2022 on a voluntary basis. This will not be a 'one size fits all' endeavor; there will be specific checklists for manuscripts in the domains of Clinical Therapeutics, Fluid Biomarkers, Imaging, Epidemiology, Translational therapeutics, Pathophysiological mechanisms, and possibly others.
- 5) **Transparency will be the norm**, with an expectation that full data sets will be released to qualified researchers through Dryad, the Open Science Foundation, or other appropriate venues.
- 6) **Emphasis on topics of increasingly recognized importance: sports concussion, military injuries, and neurotrauma in low and middle income countries.** We are enjoying working with experts on these topics to bring high impact work to the community. Furthermore, we remain committed to publishing top-quality mechanistic, diagnostic, prognostic and therapeutic papers relevant to clinical and translational traumatic spinal cord and brain injury. As you have seen, there have been some really terrific papers this year; I have tried to highlight several of them with particular salience in *Editorials* and with the *Editors Choice* designations in each issue.
- 7) **Expanded communications of your most impactful findings.** We are making careful use and employing best practices when it comes to marketing and promoting our output, including the use of social media and press releases, to promote your best work around the world. The Journal has access to top-notch author services, including professional editing, multimedia, infographics, illustration, and translation services. Your best work will get the attention it deserves.

We've had wonderful discussions at our two (virtual) Editorial Board meetings this year, and I'm looking forward to your continued questions, comments, and suggestions for how we can move forward together.

With my best personal regards,

**David L. Brody, MD, PhD**  
Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Neurotrauma*