EDITORIAL

A new hand on the tiller: Taking over the editorship of the Journal of Crohn’s and Colitis

The Journal of Crohn’s and Colitis has, in its short history to date, become one of the most important journals in gastroenterology. As the official journal of the European Crohn’s and Colitis Organization, JCC has published ECCO guidelines, workshop reports and consensus papers. Those publications constitute a knowledge base that guides doctors in the optimum care of IBD patients all around the world. JCC has also developed an increasing reputation for the publication of top quality original research, viewpoints and review articles in all aspects of IBD clinical practice and research. For all this, ECCO and the world-wide IBD community are thankful for the expertise, dedication and vision of the outgoing editor-in-chief, Miquel A. Gassull and his assistant editor, Eduard Cabré As outlined in his accompanying editorial, Professor Gassull has steered the JCC along a path of steadily increasing impact and importance. Now that I prepare to take up the role of editor-in-chief of the JCC, I am deeply conscious of the challenge that we will face to maintain the achievements of the outgoing editorial team, but also the opportunity to continue the upwards trajectory of the journal.

The JCC exists as one of the means for ECCO to achieve its mission to improve the care of patients with IBD. The journal is concerned with the dissemination of knowledge on clinical, basic science and innovative methods related to IBD. Health care professionals that are involved in the care of IBD patients can trust JCC as a source for authoritative information to guide clinical care. Researchers can look to the JCC for reports on topical scientific advances in all aspects of IBD. The primary goal of the incoming editorial team will be to maintain the position of the JCC as the key source of highly relevant medical and scientific information for healthcare professionals and scientists interested in IBD. Fortunately for us, there has never been a better time to pursue this goal. ECCO is vibrant with increasing membership and congresses, more and better IBD research is being conducted in laboratories and clinics around the world, the pipeline of new drugs is promising, and the welfare of Crohn’s and colitis patients is creeping up the agenda in political and policy-making circles.

The new editorial team will make every effort to attract the best original research articles to the JCC. This will be achieved through the increasing impact factor of the journal and by encouraging authors to submit their best work to us. Increasingly, there is particular importance and value in translational IBD research that links basic scientific discoveries to the clinic. The team of associate editors at JCC is very well equipped to attract top quality, relevant and innovative translational research. Shomron Ben-Horin, Séverine Vermeire, Daniel Hommes, Gijs van den Brink, Miles Parkes, and Silvio Danese are all well known authorities in different aspects of clinical and basic IBD research. The breadth of their expertise will be fully utilized by the JCC to ensure that the journal is increasingly recognized by authors as a top location for the best original research articles.

For authors, we will seek to provide a fast and easy interaction with the editorial team. Working with our publisher Elsevier, we will streamline the manuscript submission process and in the near future authors can expect an enhanced web portal when making submissions. We recognize that peer reviewers are a central lynch-pin of what we are trying to achieve. For reviewers, every effort will be made to solicit reviews on articles that most closely match their expertise and in a format conducive to the return of comments and recommendations that enhance the JCC’s reputation. The editorial team will focus as a priority on providing a speedy turn-around time for decisions on manuscripts by closely monitoring author–editor–reviewer interfaces and instituting process improvements in manuscript flow at every step. Where manuscripts are rejected by JCC, we will always endeavor to provide authors with the most useful feedback on their submissions.

An essential aspect of our editorial process will be to enhance as much as possible the reporting of research findings that are published in the JCC. Authors will be asked to ensure their work conforms to internationally-accepted standards for research finding reporting, such as those maintained by the EQUATOR Network. Where necessary, specialist peer reviews on biostatistics, genomics and/or
other aspects of research methodology will be solicited by us to ensure that authors receive the best guidance on writing the most accurate reports possible and minimizing the risk of errors in data interpretation. We want the JCC to be known as a highly reliable source of only the best quality information.

The JCC will remain the only journal to publish ECCO-commissioned articles. These will include practice guidelines, pathogenesis workshop reports, and other special reports. Like any other JCC article, ECCO-commissioned work will be subjected to editorial and peer review to ensure objective maintenance of the highest standards. ECCO is committed to the continued publication and regular updating of those articles which will be provided in an open access online format. The editorial team will also be proactive in commissioning topical and authoritative review articles from the best authors on all aspects of clinical and basic IBD research. We are also very interested to receive unsolicited review articles for consideration in JCC, because we aim to enhance the journals reputation for publishing the best state-of-the-art reviews in the field of IBD.

In the near future, it is likely that the digital revolution in publishing will gradually change the appearance and format of published scholarly articles. Working with our publisher, we will ensure that the JCC is positioned to benefit in the maximum possible way from developments in digital publishing. These developments will ensure that JCC content is available in the most accessible forms via electronic devices and in the timeliest way. Nevertheless, readers can be assured that this will in no way compromise the quality and authenticity of the content we publish.

This is an exciting time for the new editorial team at JCC, and I sincerely hope that our ambition is reflected in the publication of a journal that is in a state of continuous improvement. Readers and authors will judge the success of our efforts and I invite all ECCO members and other JCC readers to share with me any insights or ideas that will help us on this journey.

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