Opportunities

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The year 2021 brought solutions for our pandemic predicament but not closure. We are still on a dangerous course, but there is now some light in the distance of the proverbial tunnel. Who would have thought that in less than a year vaccines would be designed, tested and produced? Our populations in the western world are now the beneficiaries of technologies we only dreamt about not so long ago. But, as the Director General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, incessantly repeats, we will not be rid of this plague until all of us are immunized and that means humankind. The orthopaedic community has a duty to participate in the battle against this disease, deadly on many counts, health-wise of course but also economically and socially. Just as we, orthopaedic surgeons, have always lead the battle against infections in our operating rooms, think of laminar flow, space suits, double gloving, iodine drapes, prophylactic antibiotics, etc., we must be leaders on the COVID-19 front and be advocates against quacks, conspirationists and other impostors spreading falsehoods and lies.

The pandemic has had dire effects on the care of our patients afflicted with musculoskeletal disorders. Operating rooms have been shut down, and elective patients have had to wait for their elective surgeries. These delays cause well-known complications related to loss of activity. This includes osteoporosis and sarcopenia, untoward side effects of painkillers and narcotics and moral depression induced by job loss. The elderly awaiting their hip or knee surgeries have been especially impacted both by COVID-19 and by its collateral effects such as inordinate waiting times for their surgery. Scoliosis patients needing corrective surgery and children with handicapping deformities have also been impacted by unfair waits because of closed operating theatres. These waiting times may have been necessary at the beginning of the pandemic, but today, they are inflicted upon our patients by vaccine skeptics clogging up the healthcare system and exhausting healthcare workers. All these woes could be avoided today in the face of strong vaccination policies and public health strategies. Studies need to emerge to measure the true impact of the pandemic on

patients suffering from painful and debilitating diseases needing elective orthopaedic surgery.

On the positive side, the orthopaedic world is actively adapting to the new situation brought about by the pandemic. We have become experts at online educational events. Who would have predicted that the face-to-face international congresses we were taking for granted would go virtual? The EFORT meeting along with other musculoskeletal societies congresses around the world was very successful with a record number of sessions, discussions and controversies presented to an attentive audience. Lately, hybrid meetings have come in fashion created with a mix of in-person and virtual and lately in-person meetings have come back. What a relief it is to hear a 'real' speaker and to be able to argue the purported conclusions at the coffee break! Travel is starting to become more fluid but for many reasons outside of COVID-19, environmental and economic, take-off has been slow. After the winter months, hope is that the situation will continue to progress towards normalization. This pandemic has one merit: it has proven to us that we can function differently and that dogmas are made to be disrupted. That being said, we all yearn for a back to 'normal', but it will be different from what we knew.

In light of what was said above, we are proud to say that *EOR* (*EFORT Open Reviews*) offers an online solution to fill the educational gap. The impact factor of *EOR* has more than doubled in 1 year going from 2.295 in 2020 to the current 4.618; this is a tribute to the journal's efforts to bring verifiable, up-to-date and citable information to our readership. This can only be done through a team approach where every player has a specific role. The authors submit well-documented, accurate and up-to-date articles. The reviewers do an admirable job helping to improve the material by asking critical questions. Finally, the editors guide the process to fruition so that our publishers can apply the final polish and transform manuscripts into publications ready for worldwide circulation.

As our authors and readers know, *EOR* has been obliged for economic survival to go down the Article Publication Charge route. It was not an easy decision to make but a necessary one if the quality of the publication was to

be maintained. The decision turned out to be strategic because of the financial collateral effects of the pandemic. We are grateful to our authors, contributors and sponsors for their positive response and for continuing to submit the high-level articles that are responsible for *FOR*'s resounding success.

It is time to announce the major changes that will take place in *FOR*. After 6 years of a successful launch followed by an intensely positive collaboration with the British Editorial Society of Bone & Joint Surgery (BESBJS), we have, of a common accord, decided to part ways. The Editors of *FOR* and the EFORT Board are immensely grateful to the BESBJS for their continuing and active support throughout these years. A special thanks to Peter Richardson and Richard Hollingsworth former and current Directors of publishing of the BESBJS.

After an intensive search, the *FOR* task force led by current EFORT President Li Felländer-Tsai has proposed Bioscientifica, a publishing company based in Bristol (UK), to be the new publisher for *FOR* starting January 2022. We welcome the opportunity to work with a proactive and dedicated team led by Simon Buckmaster, and this has been approved by the EFORT board. The change will not impact *FOR*; our authors will be able to submit as of before, and our articles will keep the look and feel our readership has become used to, with some improvements.

Finally, thanks to the EFORT Board and to the BESBJS for their continuing support to make 2021 the best year for *FOR* yet. The impact factor is the proof of the pudding, and according to our evaluations, the pudding might be even better next year! All my thanks go to our authors and contributors and to our tireless group of reviewers and associate editors. Mandy Webb is the superb managing editor I was privileged to collaborate with on a weekly basis, and she bears a good part of the responsibility of *FOR*'s success. I am also grateful to Charlotte Parkins, product manager, responsible for the high quality of *FOR*'s publications. On the EFORT side, Susan Davenport, education manager, and Adrian Ott, EFORT CEO, provide the support for making *FOR* possible. We welcome the opportunity to work with our new publisher Bioscientifica and its dedicated staff and bear no doubt that 2022 will be most successful!

Best wishes to all!

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