

# As we reflect on the year 2023.....

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As we reflect on the year 2023, a mix of nostalgia and optimism fills our hearts. We cherish the positive moments as the solid foundation on which we build our future. Our sights are firmly set on the promising prospects of 2024, fully aware that most of our time and efforts will be devoted to the days ahead.

In 2023, we witnessed the transformation of the *European Heart Journal Acute Vascular Care* into an exclusive online journal, a pioneer within the *European Journal of Cardiology* journal family. Over the past year, our journal has ventured into the digital realm, tirelessly exploring new avenues to enhance your reading experience. While our aspirations have occasionally outstripped the capabilities of publishing technology, our commitment to innovation remains unwavering.

Our dedication to upholding the highest standards of excellence in our journal is paramount. The relevance and integrity of our content are at the forefront of our concerns. We have set rigorous standards for our authors, recognizing that the beginning significantly shapes the ultimate impact, paving the path to a brighter future. The trust our authors place in us is a testament to our tireless behind the scenes efforts. We diligently assess submitted work for its suitability within the journal, novelty, and research quality as essential criteria. These factors significantly influence whether a manuscript proceeds to the peer review stage, following the initial review by our editorial team. We are delighted to announce the addition of Dr Sean van Diepen to our team of deputy editors to further enhance this process.

We remain steadfast in our pursuit of timely peer review, without compromising the rigour of the process. We aim to provide valuable feedback to our authors, nurturing the improvement of manuscript quality. Some papers gain enhanced informational value when placed in a broader context. To achieve this, we offer editorials and, when appropriate, infographics. Infographics are a visual way to convey information on a specific manuscript or topic, using images, graphs, icons, and concise text to make data engaging and easily digestible. We hope these infographics not only capture your attention but also maintain your interest. Dr Maria Bergami has joined our team as the editor overseeing this process, and these infographics will also be featured in our social media updates which will, present relevant research in a visually concise format, ready for immediate application. With this, we also welcome Dr Melica Aleksic, who will take over from Konstantin Krychtiuk, to lead the social media team for our publication.

The peer review system in academic publishing faces a significant crisis, further exacerbated by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. This system relies heavily on unpaid experts who diligently review scholarly articles and are currently under substantial strain. Surprisingly, journal submissions have not significantly decreased, even in fields unrelated to the pandemic, intensifying the demands on the community of peer-review volunteers. In variance, we are witnessing a diminishing pool of tenured faculty members available to undertake these responsibilities. One potential solution to alleviate this crisis is to reconsider the practice of revise-and-resubmit. While designed to enhance scientific rigour, this process often leads to prolonged and disheartening revisions for authors. With this in mind, we would like to express our gratitude to all the reviewers who supported our journal, and most especially to our top reviewers (list printed in the issue of the journal).

In response to this crisis, innovative solutions are imperative. These may include encouraging institutions to formally recognize and reward the contributions of peer reviewers to balance their workload. Collaboration between journals to share reviewer databases and distribute the burden more evenly is another viable strategy. Ultimately, a multifaceted approach that combines these solutions can help reinvigorate the peer review system, ensuring the rigorous evaluation of scientific research and the continued importance of academic publishing in knowledge dissemination.

As we begin 2024, we are thrilled to continue on a positive note. We continue to value and seek your opinion as we seek to expand the field of acute cardiology and intensive care. Our educational papers are frequently cited, and the combined contributions to the Biomarker Spotlight already form a high-quality textbook on this subject. To maintain this momentum, we are proud to introduce a new feature in 2024, the Statistical Spotlight. We will once again present the principles/challenges of biostatistics in a concise format through brief contributions. Our statistical editors, Xavier Rossello Lozano and Johan Verbeeck will play a pivotal role in shaping this feature.

Last but certainly not least, we are honoured to co-publish the European Society of Cardiology Guidelines on acute coronary syndromes, complemented by a North American and Asian perspective. We extend our gratitude to the European Society of Cardiology for this privilege.

With these developments, we eagerly anticipate 2024 with ambition and extend warm wishes to you and your loved ones for a prosperous and, above all, healthy New Year.

**Conflict of interest:** None declared.