



Crea, F., Badimon, L., Berry, C. , De Caterina, R., Elliott, P. M., Hatala, R., Libby, P., Linde, C. and Tybjaerg-Hansen on behalf of the EHJ Editorial Board, A. (2022) The European Heart Journal: fulfilling the mission. *European Heart Journal*, 43(23), pp. 2181-2184. (doi: [10.1093/eurheartj/ehac171](https://doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehac171))

The material cannot be used for any other purpose without further permission of the publisher and is for private use only.

There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

<https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/271280/>

Deposited on 23 September 2022

Enlighten – Research publications by members of the University of
Glasgow
<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk>

The European Heart Journal: fulfilling the mission

Filippo Crea^{1,2*}, Lina Badimon³, Colin Berry⁴, Raffaele De Caterina⁵, Perry M. Elliott⁶, Robert Hatala⁷, Peter Libby⁸, Cecilia Linde⁹, and Anne Tybjaerg-Hansen¹⁰; on behalf of the EHJ Editorial Board

1 Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario A. Gemelli IRCCS, Rome, Italy; 2 Department of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Sciences, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome, Italy; 3 Cardiovascular Program (ICCC)-IR, Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau, CIBERCV, Barcelona, Spain; 4 BHF Glasgow Cardiovascular Research Centre, Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK; 5 University Cardiology Division, Pisa University Hospital, Pisa, Italy; 6 Barts Heart Centre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, UK; and Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, University College London, London, UK; 7 National Cardiovascular Institute, Faculty of Medicine, Slovak Medical University, 831 01 Bratislava, Slovakia; 8 Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA, USA; 9 Heart and Vascular Theme, Karolinska University Hospital and Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden; and 10 Section for Cardiovascular Genetics, Department of Clinical Biochemistry, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen University Hospital; and Department of Clinical Medicine, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

* Corresponding Author. Dipartimento di Scienze Cardiologiche e Pneumologiche, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Largo Agostino Gemelli 8, 00168 Roma, Italy. Tel: 39 06 305 11 66, Fax: 39 06 3055535, Email: filippo.crea@unicatt.it

Mission statement

In 2020, we wrote the following in our inaugural editorial:

“The fundamental mission of the *EHJ* remains the reduction of the global burden of cardiovascular disease. We aspire to advance this aim by worldwide teamwork to communicate *practice-changing research*, *inspire clinical cardiologists*, and *pursue rigour and transparency* in the application of science at the service of human health. The *Journal* will strive to lead the field in its impact, influence, and reach” (1).

One year on, the time has come to assess our progress.

Publication of practice-changing research

In 2021 we received over 4000 manuscripts from all five continents. These were assessed by the Editorial Board and a panel of external expert reviewers in accordance with our rigorous three stage editorial process, (2) and translated into 492 original clinical and translational manuscripts, reviews, meta-analyses, guidelines, special articles, viewpoints and editorials. The *EHJ* prioritises research articles that represent a major advance in knowledge. Original research is complemented by ‘state-of-the-art’ review articles by thought leaders, debates on ‘hot topics’ in cardiovascular medicine, and viewpoint articles. Nearly every original article is accompanied by an Editorial, helping the reader to frame the original research in a wider context.

We use several highly effective platforms to maximize the visibility and impact of high-quality research. By working closely with the European Society of Cardiology (*ESC*) and the other journals of the *ESC* Journal family, *EHJ* content is disseminated via social media using the twitter handles for the *ESC* (more than 115,000 followers), the *ESC* Journal family (more than 65,000 followers) and the *EHJ* (more than 12,000 followers). Articles of broad scientific interest are highlighted in press releases and typically receive wide media attention, attracting high Altmetric scores. In addition, *EHJ* alerts, including our electronic Table of Contents, have over ... subscriptions. This strategy yielded more than 13 million downloads in 2021.

Articles published in the *Journal* are placed in the Advance Access section of our website within 2 weeks of acceptance, permitting access via the *ESC* Journals App. In addition, the *Journal* facilitates Fast Track simultaneous publication of papers being presented at the most important congresses, posting the accepted manuscript version as a PDF typically within two days of acceptance. The PDF is then replaced by the typeset version usually within two weeks.

In 2021 we created the Desmond Julian Award (3) in honour of the founding editor of the *EHJ* who served in the role from 1980 to 1988, and who set the foundational principles of a *Journal* that ranks today as the leading periodical in the field of cardiovascular medicine. The award is bestowed upon the first author of the best article published in the *EHJ* during the previous year. Articles are judged by the Editor-in-Chief and the Executive Editors on originality, methodology, presentation, and impact assessed using a variety of bibliometric indexes. The first recipient of the Desmond Julian Award was Dr. Izhiah E. Sama for an exciting study on ACE-2 levels in patients with heart failure (4). The award will be presented each year during the Annual Meeting of the *ESC*.

Inspiration of clinical cardiologists

The mission of the *Journal* is to publish practice-changing research by creating a virtual global community that includes scientists and clinicians from different specialities who are involved in cardiovascular medicine and research. The following three innovations have facilitated this aspiration.

CardioPulse, an established section of the *Journal*, reports on issues of general interest, such as personal stories, political aspects affecting our profession, historical vignettes, cardiology practice, national healthcare systems, funding sources in different countries, and many other issues of cardiovascular advocacy. CardioPulse has been enriched with two new sections: the Braunwald Corner and the Weekly Journal Scan. Braunwald Corner articles are – as the name implies – authored by Prof. Eugene Braunwald, universally recognized as the father of modern cardiology. In 2021 we published eight of these contributions, addressing several areas of cardiovascular medicine: the first editorial was entitled “Cardiology in 2021” (5). We are grateful to Prof. Braunwald for his considerable contribution to the *Journal* not only for these Corner articles but also for his activity as an author, reviewer, and editor. The **Weekly Journal Scan** opens a window onto studies in the field of cardiovascular medicine published in top internal medicine and cardiology journals. Each week, the Weekly Journal Scan editors review recent literature and select one study published during the previous week, providing key points and a brief editorial comment to add perspective to the study.

EHJ Dialogues is a monthly interactive live webinar during which the Editors engage top clinicians and scientists from around the World. The Dialogues highlight the contribution of our guests to the history of cardiovascular medicine and has proven particularly stimulating for colleagues at the beginning of their careers (6-8).

Finally, another connection between the *Journal* and cardiologists has been established by supporting a global programme of joint sessions with the *EHJ* at major international congresses. A total of 25 sessions were organized in 2021, and an even larger number is planned for 2022. This initiative has been made possible by the outstanding work of our global panel of Co-Editors.

The excellence of scientific journals depends on the work of many dedicated reviewers. By checking the existing literature, proof reading and verifying internal consistency, they ensure that the process of selecting articles for publication is both rigorous and fair. The partnership between the *Journal* and the reviewers has been strengthened by a recent agreement between ESC and European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), which allows the *Journal* to provide Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits for completed high-quality reviews starting from January 2022. Reviewers also participate in *EHJ* Dialogues and are eligible for awards given during the annual ESC Congress, and we have recently instituted the *EHJ* Mentorship Program, which provides the opportunity of one-on-one training and coaching with an active Deputy/Associate Editor at *EHJ*. The main objective of this program is to coach promising colleagues early on in their career to refine their reviewer and editorship skills.

Pursuit of rigour and transparency

The *EHJ* is committed to publishing only the best cardiovascular science adhering to the highest ethical principles. *EHJ* uses rigorous peer-review, critical statistical review, and the highest quality editorial process, to ensure the novelty, accuracy, quality, and relevance of all accepted manuscripts.

During the last year regular weekly web-based meetings of the Editorial Board have created a unique platform for creative brainstorming focused on any valuable manuscript which deserves special attention. This is most often the case when no clear consensus on manuscript assessment could be reached among the reviewers. Here it is our ambition to trigger a fair interactive process with authors to help navigate their work towards improving quality and clarifying their scientific and/or clinical message to our readership.

The *EHJ* subscribes to the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) for the conduct, reporting, editing, and publication of scholarly work in biomedical journals. The *EHJ* is a registered member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and endorses this code of conduct on ethical issues in research and publication. Original research articles undergo statistical review. To enhance knowledge and reproducibility, authors are asked to provide a statement on the availability of data. In addition to the *ESC Journal Family Ethics Committee* the *EHJ* has appointed a Quality Standards Editor who recently published the *EHJ Quality Standards – a Special Article* outlining the high standards pursued by the *Journal* in relation to Authorship, conflict of interest, trial registration, pre-prints, data sharing and statistical analyses (9).

Finally, the *Journal* actively supports equality, diversity and inclusion of sex, gender, age, ethnicity, or geographical diversity, and encourages considering this diversity when reporting and analysing data of studies, registries, and trials (10). The *Journal* aims to maintain and expand the diversity of its Editorial board, Reviewer pool and Authors.

Future Perspectives

We will strive to publish original and innovative research aimed at improving patient care through the optimization of prevention, the understanding of disease mechanisms, and the identification of new therapeutic targets. In population science we encourage studies which exploit the potential of the human genome, as well as those that identify new relevant environmental risk factors. In clinical science we favour studies which exploit the potential of stratified/personalized approaches also using transparent artificial intelligence for augmenting diagnostic/prognostic precision. We also favour studies on novel molecular and nucleic acid-based therapies prioritizing randomised, controlled clinical trials, and bias minimisation as well as evidence synthesis using individual patient data over meta-analyses using aggregated results drawn from publications. In translational science we encourage studies which identify disease mechanisms leading to the identification of new actionable therapeutic targets in humans (Graphical abstract).

We assess manuscripts quickly and efficiently, rewarding those showing the greatest originality, methodological robustness and impact on patient care. Our aspiration is to not only be global but also truly interdisciplinary as witnessed by the activity of more than sixty Deputy and international Associate Editors who are top experts in more than twenty fields of cardiovascular medicine. The Editorial Board will continue to represent the *Journal* at major international conferences across the five continents.

Finally, the *Journal* takes advantage of our strong relationship with the *ESC Journal family*, by providing expedited handling for authors who wish to transfer worthy manuscripts not accepted in the *EHJ* to a specialty journal. This option offers many benefits including the potential to publish work faster without the need to reformat submissions within the highly prestigious *ESC Journal Family – the largest in cardiovascular medicine*.

Conclusions

Mission statements are important in any enterprise. The mission statement of an organization is a short description of what it is trying to do, its reason for existing, a written declaration of the core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time. After more than one year of experience as Executive Editors of the *EHJ* we hope our community will agree the mission statement is being fulfilled. Indeed, in

serving the *Journal* we are guided by the belief that medicine should improve not only the duration but also the quality of life and that scientific knowledge should meet the needs of the individual and transform the global environment towards the creation of heart healthy populations.

We are proud to serve one of the most important scientific journals in cardiovascular medicine with the aim of reducing the impact of cardiovascular disease on death and disability worldwide. Our various initiatives strive to strengthen further links between Editors, Authors, Reviewers and Readers through a series of coordinated and diverse activities, including webinars, active social media presence, active participation at congresses worldwide. We hope to foster the committed network of volunteers that constitutes an integral part of our mission. As stewards of the *EHJ*, our primary goal is to publish and promote excellent science, and not solely to achieve a high impact factor (which attests to the scientific quality and influence of our publications). Our primary goals remain to disseminate the highest quality and most important and clinically-relevant new knowledge and thereby elevate the practice of cardiovascular medicine and reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease worldwide.

References

- 1) Crea F, Badimon L, Berry C, De Caterina R, Elliott PM, Hatala R et al. The European Heart Journal: leading the fight to reduce the global burden of cardiovascular disease. *Eur Heart J.* 2020;41:3113-3116.
- 2) Lüscher TF, Fox K, Hamm C, Carter RE, Taddei S, Simoons M et al. Scientific integrity: what a journal can and cannot do. *Eur Heart J.* 2020;41:4552-4555.
- 3) Crea F, Braunwald E. A new initiative of the European Heart Journal: the Desmond Julian Award. *Eur Heart J.* 2021;42:3894-3895.
- 4) Sama IE, Ravera A, Santema BT, van Goor H, Ter Maaten JM, Cleland JGF et al. Circulating plasma concentrations of angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 in men and women with heart failure and effects of renin-angiotensin-aldosterone inhibitors. *Eur Heart J.* 2020;41:1810-1817
- 5) Braunwald E. Cardiology in 2021. *Eur Heart J.* 2021;42:959.
- 6) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hm_zLeZ7rnE
- 7) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5LZNbnajek>
- 8) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouA69Abreso>
- 9) Alfonso F, Torp-Pedersen C, Carter RE, Crea F. European Heart Journal quality standards. *Eur Heart J.* 2021;42:2729-2736
- 10) Lüscher TF, Miller VM, Bairey Merz CN, Crea F. Diversity is richness: why data reporting according to sex, age, and ethnicity matters. *Eur Heart J.* 2020;41:3117-3121.