REC: Interventional Cardiology in the COVID-19 year

REC: Interventional Cardiology en el año de la COVID-19

José M. de la Torre-Hernández, a,,* Fernando Alfonso, b Juan Sanchis, b and Raúl Moreno b

a Editor-in-chief, REC: Interventional Cardiology
b Associated editor, REC: Interventional Cardiology

Actions and landmarks reached by REC Inter Cardiol

Indexing
• Acceptance in Scopus
• Acceptance in DOAJ (Spanish and English versions)
• Acceptance in the Latindex directory and catalogue
• Acceptance in Dialnet

Peer-review
• Granting of CASEC credits to reviewers
• Appointment of elite reviewers
• Systematization of the use of a checklist of ethical questions by the editors

Editorial issues
• Systematic inclusion of the following sections: conflicts of interests, funding, and author’s contributions
• More space per issue to the following sections: images in cardiology (3), and scientific letters (4)
• Possibility of spontaneous submission of review articles
• Time limit for the submission of the revised version of original articles (30 days)
• 2-prize award for original articles, one rewarded with €1500, and the other with €1000

Peer-review + editorial issues
• Systematization of use of a checklist of ethical questions by the editors
• Appointment of elite reviewers
• Grants of CASEC credits to reviewers
• Award of 2-prizes for original articles

Figure 1. Changes and advances made over the last year.

WHAT DID WE ACCOMPLISH AND CHANGE OVER THE LAST YEAR?

This past year, several milestones have been achieved and changes have been made to improve the performance of the journal whilst essential characteristics have been maintained, like its totally free-of-charge/open-access nature, and bilingual publication [in Spanish and English] followed by an optimal presentation both in the online version and in the limited print edition.

Figure 1 shows many of the changes and advances made along the way to achieve public and institutional recognition in the last year.

* Corresponding author: REC: Interventional Cardiology, Ntra. Sra. de Guadalupe 5, 28028 Madrid, Spain.
E-mail address: rec@intervcardiol.org [J.M. de la Torre-Hernández].

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Table

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editorial complexity involved in the publication of these articles in a timely manner.

The number of awards for the best articles of the year has been increased - from 2021, we will grant a first prize, €1500 euros, and a second prize, €1000 euros.)

EDITORIAL ACTIVITY

We will now present the activity of the journal until the present time (data from the period that goes from July 2020 through June 2021).

Firstly, the content published between 2019 and 2020 has increased by 36% (from 55 to 75 manuscripts) as show in figure 2. This increase has occurred in almost all the article formats published in the journal. It was also very satisfactory to publish for the first time the abstracts of the ACI-SEC congress. This year’s congress abstracts will also be included in the last issue of 2021.

Another rewarding aspect is the international origin of some of the articles submitted. Up to 17% of these manuscripts came from 14 different nationalities, especially from Latin American countries. Most manuscripts are submitted in Spanish, which does not necessarily indicate their origin, but submissions in English are increasing.

Letters to the Editor

Between July 2020 and June 2021, a total of 16 letters were submitted (figure 5), 70% of which were accepted for publication. Most of them were received during the third quarter of 2020. However, the number of letters received dropped later (figure 5), a trend also seen in the clinical cases (figure 6) and images in cardiology sections (figure 7). In all cases, the quarterly nature of the journal allowed to complete this content several issues in advance. The editorial committee publicised the situation, which discouraged some authors from submitting articles to these sections. Although the space available for letters has been increased (up to 4 since the last issue of 2020), we still need to find a break-even point by securing a constant publication demand without generating a large stock whose content could lose momentum regarding print publication.

Clinical cases

As previously mentioned, clinical cases experienced a situation similar to that of the letters: an increase in reception during 2019-2020 was followed by a decrease in 2021 (figure 6).

The explanation seems to be the same. Only 1 case is published per issue—4 cases throughout the natural year—which significantly limits the capacity of acceptance. The stock of cases forced us to be highly restrictive as well, and only 2 of the 6 cases received within the same period were accepted, somehow discouraging submission.
**Figure 3.** A: language of the manuscripts received. B: origin of the manuscripts received.
*Data from 2021 include the first and second quarter of the year only.*

**Figure 4.** Original articles received since the journal was launched until June 30, 2021, by quarters of the year.

**Figure 5.** Letters to the Editor received since the journal was launched until June 30, 2021, by quarters of the year.

**Figure 6.** Clinical cases received since the journal was launched until June 30, 2021, by quarters of the year.

**Figure 7.** Images received since the journal was launched until June 30, 2021, by quarters of the year.
Images in cardiology

In the interannual period covered by this analysis a total of 18 images were received (figure 7), but only 7 were accepted for publication. The evolution of this type of content is very similar to that of cases and letters: the stock of images pending publication limits the possibility of acceptance, thus discouraging submission. Given these circumstances, over the last year the number of images published per issue was increased from 2 to 3.

CONTENTS TRANSFERRED FROM REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA

Our flagship publication, Revista Española de Cardiología, has a high impact factor, making it highly attractive for researchers worldwide. This creates an inevitable mismatch between the number of manuscripts received and the number of manuscripts accepted, setting the bar of article rejection quite high despite the undeniable interest of many of the manuscripts. REC: Interventional Cardiology’s editorial committee evaluates rejected manuscripts within the scope of the journal and offers the authors the possibility of submitting them to our journal.

Over the last interannual period, the authors of 14 manuscripts accepted this referral proposal. We strongly believe that, in time, this alternative will become more attractive and accepted.

THE AUTHORS

The editorial committee wishes to take a moment to write a few words of gratitude to the true architects of this journal, those who have made it possible: the authors of the contents. Our journal is still in its infancy and cannot offer an impact factor to those researchers who decide to publish with us. That is why their contribution is especially appreciated, because it elevates the journal to quality levels that will bring the impact it truly deserves.

This gratitude is not only applicable to the authors who submit their manuscripts spontaneously, but also to those who accept the invitation of the editorial committee to elaborate top quality commissioned contents.

THE REVIEWERS

Last year’s Editor’s page already discussed the praiseworthy work of our reviewers for their positive response and speedy delivery of their very high-quality evaluations. This year we wish to bring it up again as their response has been the same. Figure 8 includes the evaluation times, and the editorial decision-making times. The performance of our reviewers is simply exceptional. It only takes them an average 8.8 days to evaluate all kinds of contents, and a little over 10.1 days to evaluate original articles. Compared to other journals outside the REC Publications journal family, this is truly remarkable.

For all this, we think all reviewers should be congratulated on their work [table 1]. Also, our elite reviewers deserve special credit due to their exceptional evaluations and fast-track responses [table 2]. Their work is recognized with CASEC credits.

OUR WEBSITE

Despite our limited print edition, the dissemination of the journal’s content in this digital age is predominantly online. The main incoming traffic to our website is organic traffic that grows parallel to the indexing of our contents in database search engines, followed by direct traffic and accesses from other sites: the SEC website, ACI-SEC official website, where the journal has gained visibility, Revista Española de Cardiología, REC: CardioClinics, Google Scholar, Campus IMAS, websites, etc.
We wish to take this opportunity to thank all Latin American scientific societies that have included a hyperlink to our journal in their official websites.

Our journal is read all over the world. The highest number of visits come from Spain, followed by the United States, Mexico, Argentina, and India (figure 9).

Regarding social networks, Twitter is our main source of traffic (62%) followed by Facebook (28%), Instagram (5%), and LinkedIn (2%).

Our homepage, ahead-of-print contents, abstracts, and COVID-19-related contents have been quite visited. Also, we should mention the interest generated by contents such as the special article on the percutaneous management of tricuspid regurgitation, or the review article on TAVI in special indications.13,14

Between the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, our publishing house, Permanyer Publications Ltd., updated the journal website6 several times to make it more stable and lay the foundations for its future growth. The site design has not changed since most of these changes are invisible to the user. However, they improve the user navigation experience allowing new possibilities for the growing volume of contents in our journal.

**DISSEMINATION**

The journal’s Editor’s videos15 with author interviews, were consolidated over the last year. Thanks to streaming recordings, the difficulties following the lack of mobility due to the pandemic were overcome. We became more familiar with a new recording format that allows more flexibility and dynamism. Several authors have expressed their appreciation and surprise for the unexpected peaks of visibility that these videos had had for their articles among our scientific community.

In addition, newsletters with a summary of the latest issue published are sent to our subscribers quarterly. The bulletins sent by Revista Española de Cardiología include a hyperlink to our contents too.

Also, the latest articles published on REC: Interventional Cardiology can be found on Revista Española de Cardiología’s website.

Interviews with the authors of our articles are regularly published in the blog Cardiología Hoy16 on the SEC website. Also, different access windows have become available for the users (homepage, publications section, etc.). REC: Interventional Cardiology’s articles are disseminated through SEC bulletins. In addition, our journal has its own specific space on SEC News.

REC Interventional Cardiology was also present in discussion forums specifically created for our journal in congresses and scientific meetings held over the last year in Latin American countries, namely Mexico and Venezuela.

**AWARD TO THE BEST ARTICLE PUBLISHED ON REC: INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGY**

As with all our activities, the initiatives to disseminate our journal have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The first-edition award for the best article published on REC: Interventional Cardiology...
went to "Quantitative flow ratio in myocardial infarction for the evaluation of non-infarct-related arteries. The QIMERA pilot study". The prize was awarded during the 31st ACI-SEC Congress that was held virtually in 2020. For the second edition, the ACI-SEC has decided to increase the reward and number of prizes awarded to 2 (an overall prize of €2500; first prize, €1500; second prize, €1000).

The COVID-19 year changed the world overnight. Big— and in many cases permanent— changes have occurred. Our journal knew how to face this historic crisis and came up strong. As we mentioned earlier, the trajectory of REC: Interventional Cardiology keeps consolidating, growing, and improving to achieve higher levels of recognition. It is the culmination of a dream that a group of Spanish interventional cardiologists had for years. A dream that has become an unquestionable reality today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

So far we have shown our appreciation to authors and reviewers alike for their essential role in our journal. As the editor-in-chief, I also wish to show my profound gratitude for the work done by associated editors Dr. Juan Sanchis, Dr. Fernando Alfonso, and Dr. Raúl Moreno.

Dr. Juan Sanchis has become the editor-in-chief of Revista Española de Cardiología, which is a guarantee of success in the future of this publication.

For the last 2 years, Dr. Raúl Moreno has been a member of the editorial team, and the president of ACI-SEC. The incoming new president, Dr. Ignacio Cruz, will also be one of the main pillars of the journal. We should remember that the ACI-SEC is the leading sponsor of our journal, which is essential to guarantee its viability. And speaking of funding, we wish to thank the contribution made from companies associated editors Dr. Juan Sanchis, Dr. Fernando Alfonso, and Dr. Raúl Moreno.

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to the members of Revista Española de Cardiología editorial office including Iria del Río, Eva M. Cardenal, Belén Juan, María González Nogal, and Helena Gómez Lobo, TIC consultant Pablo Avanzas, the SEC TIC working group, and the entire team at Permanyer Publications Ltd. for their excellent work and dedication. The enthusiasm shown at the beginning has not wavered and is now stronger than ever.

The dedication and devotion of all these people have been unconditional and remain an ongoing stimulus for this editorial team.

“To be perfect is to have changed often”

J.H. Newman

FUNDING

None declared.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None reported.

REFERENCES