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Editorial

The *Journal of Adolescent Health's* Editor-In-Chief's Annual Reflection: A Year of COVID, Coping, and Creativity



The COVID pandemic has dramatically impacted people of all ages, in all countries, over the past year. The *Journal of Adolescent Health* (JAH) remains focused on its commitment to publishing high-quality science that can be used to improve the health and well-being of adolescents and young adults. This year, an added focus has been the impact of the pandemic on young people 10–25 years of age. The JAH received the first submission related to COVID-19 on March 3, 2020, and through December 2020 had received 259 COVID-related submissions. We have accepted 66 for publication (many after fast-track reviews), and 22 original articles and adolescent health briefs had been published by the end of 2020. This surge of research occurred within the context of our continuing commitment to publishing science in our typical content domains. In the previous year (2019), the JAH received approximately 150 submissions per month between March and December. During the same interval in 2020, the JAH received approximately 200 submissions per month, which represents an increase both in submissions on our traditional topics and COVID-specific submissions (Figure 1).

We are working hard to publish science, editorials, commentaries, and letters that help us understand and support young people across the globe during this pandemic. A full list of publications can be found on the JAH COVID-landing page (<https://www.jahonline.org/action/doSearch?text1=COVID-19&field1=AbstractTitleKeywordFilterField>). These publications include reports of early experiences around the world [1–4], the use of telehealth to deliver care when physical distancing was mandated for safety of patients and healthcare professionals [5–12], potential concerns about increased risk of COVID among smokers or young people with asthma [13–15], COVID testing, and seroprevalence studies [16–18], and many publications aimed at increasing our understanding of the impact of the COVID pandemic on behaviors, mental health, and coping strategies among adolescents and young adults. Publications focused on COVID vaccination are emerging [19,20], and several JAH Intersection publications have contributed context via personal narratives and photography [21–23].

It is important to note that our timely focus on COVID did not diminish work directed toward other priorities. We continued our efforts to increase the impact of JAH through innovation. We implemented a strategy to identify and amplify 12 JAH articles published in 2020 that made distinguished contributions to the field. Candidate articles were nominated by peer reviewers, who

were asked to indicate whether they felt the manuscripts that they have reviewed warranted special recognition if accepted for publication. The JAH's associate editors and I reviewed all nominations and selected 12 to be identified as the 2020 Distinguished Dozen. These articles, as well as several thoughtful accompanying editorials, were presented together in our March 2021 issue [24]. I encourage you to review and disseminate this important science to your colleagues and trainees.

In addition, we have collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization to publish infographics summarizing recent results from important national and international data sources [25,26]. This year, the JAH Intersection Editor and Selection Committee have formalized the vision and processes to guide this new section of the journal and successfully ran a contest focused on the theme of Allyship. Accepted artwork, poems, and narratives will be published in the JAH over the course of the upcoming year. Finally, the JAH is committed to publishing work aimed at informing efforts to address racism and support diversity, equity, and inclusion [27–34].

The JAH continues to publish sponsored supplements focused on specific themes. In 2020, the JAH published the following four supplements:

- (1) Gender norms and adolescent health.
- (2) Understanding adolescent health and well-being in context: cross-national findings from the health behavior in a school-aged children study.
- (3) Innovative digital technologies to improve adolescent and young adult health.
- (4) Adolescent health in China: epidemiology, policy, financing, and service provision.

For the first time ever, a JAH supplement was translated. The adolescent health in China supplement was translated and widely disseminated to influence practice, policy, and programs [35]. When we began working on the supplement on innovative digital technologies, little did we suspect the important role that telemedicine and other technologies would play in enhancing our ability to care for young people and their families during the worldwide pandemic [36].

With regards to open access publishing, the JAH's editors are carefully navigating a complex and evolving landscape [37]. In January 2021, the JAH was designated a “transformative” journal,

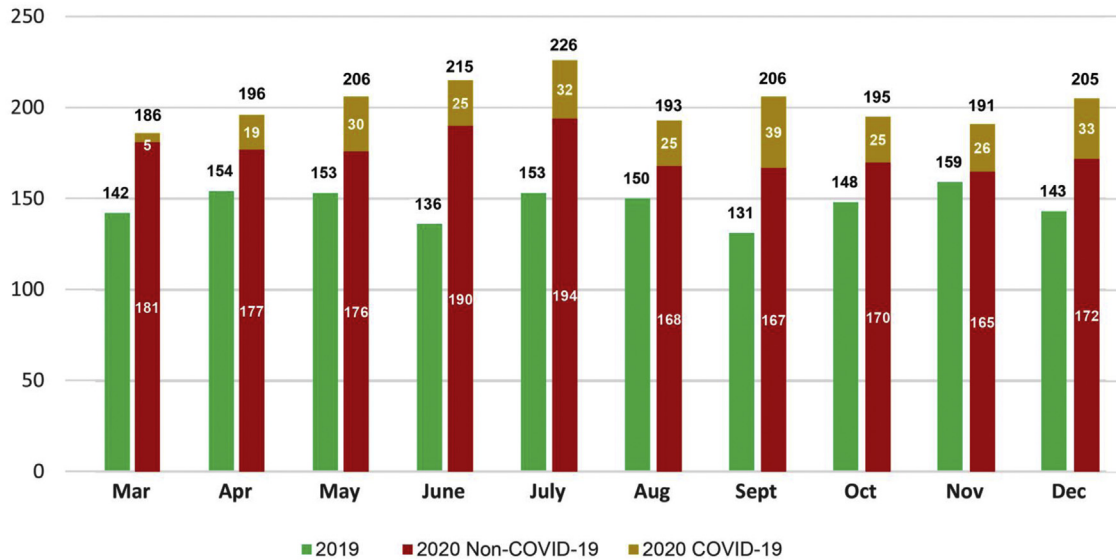


Figure 1. Total manuscript submissions to the JAH during March to December 2019 and 2020. JAH = *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

indicating that our current subscription/hybrid access model journal fulfills criteria set out by cOAlition S, the open access advocacy organization. This ensures that authors supported by funders implementing the Plan S principles will be allowed to publish their work in the JAH, either in the regular issue or supplement issues.

The production of a scientific journal takes an extraordinary amount of teamwork. During this year of tremendous professional and personal stress, it has been gratifying to work with a talented and committed JAH team. This *journal* has survived and thrived because of the hard work of our associate editors Cherrie B. Boyer PhD, Catherine M. Gordon MD MS, Carolyn T. Halpern PhD, and David A. Ross BMBCh PhD; supplements editor Charles E Irwin Jr. MD; JAH Intersection editor Sheila Quinn DO; managing editor Tor Berg; editorial analyst Teresa Dal Santo PhD; the *journal's* editorial board; Elsevier's publishing team, led by Mr. Luke Verrillo; contributing authors; and the many professionals who have generously contributed their time by providing peer review [38]. During a very challenging year, this team has consistently supported the JAH in fulfilling its commitment to publishing high-quality science that can be used to improve the health and well-being of adolescents and young adults. My sincere appreciation to all you.

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