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Forensic Science International: Reports

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Opening Editorial

2020 - A new decade of forensic science



We have been overwhelmed with the volume of quality submissions received in 2019, with over 40 published articles - including 12 case reports - across fields including digital forensics, genetics, pathology, anthropology, and wildlife forensics. Particularly encouraging is the broad geographical representation of authors, aligning with our goal of promoting discourse within the global forensic and legal communities. We sincerely thank our authors, reviewer community, and editorial board members for their efforts in making this new venture a success. Equally, we are appreciative of the support shown by the broader forensic community, with over 25,000 article downloads since our platform launch in June.

Amongst the most downloaded publications featured in our inaugural issue are the potential application of robotic process automation in digital forensics [1], the role of DNA databases in countering illegal wildlife trade [2], and a case report of unexpected fatality due to cardiac myxoma [3]. We are also proud to have published our first report of 'negative results' which to date has seen nearly 450 downloads within just six months [4]. We look forward to seeing further such submissions reporting unexpected but highly relevant outcomes in the coming year.

As we reflect on the recent steps taken across the forensic sciences to improve current operating practices, enhance field-wide quality assurance, and advance our knowledge through research; we hope to see a continuation on this path moving forward. Whilst incremental improvements are being witnessed and welcomed, many challenges still remain. This requires the forensic community to continue to develop, undertake, and disseminate rigorous research. In particular, in the field of forensic genetics, guidelines for the publication of population data and for ethical publication of biological material are currently being developed together with our sister journal, *Forensic Science International: Genetics*.

Looking to the future, we strive to continue promoting the open dissemination of scientifically sound research contributions that can benefit forensic practitioners, managers and policy-makers. We recognise

that the forensic community is entering a new era of transparency that seeks to increase the robustness and accessibility of forensic science, both to stakeholders and the general public. With this in mind, the journal specifically encourages the reporting of work that consolidates and validates existing knowledge. It is thus with great pleasure that we have developed a partnership with the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) to share validation studies and other short works across a range of forensic disciplines.

We are already well on the way to an equally exciting volume in 2020, with over a dozen articles accepted or in press at the time of writing. As always, we look forward to the challenges and opportunities that this expansion will inevitably bring.

Declaration of competing interests

The authors are the Section Editors for *Forensic Science International: Reports* and have previously published with Elsevier.

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