

From the Editor

No pain, no gain? (Re)opening up research in 2021

The past year has been the most challenging of the century for many of us, both for those working in research and in clinical care. A global rise of the COVID-19 virus has led to tremendous socio-economic impact and individual health consequences. The impact of COVID-19 on clinical care has been tremendous and many of us have been facing the consequences, whether as a direct COVID-19 fighter on the frontline, working at ICUs to help patients by the best of rapidly evolving knowledge, or in the long and complex rehabilitation of COVID-19 patients helping them regain function.

While we have never before seen such an acceleration in research publishing on one topic, we also faced major difficulties on the continuation of studies on ‘regular’ musculoskeletal care. Many were forced to stop the inclusion of patients, trials came to premature endings and patients could not be followed up during their inclusion. More than ever, the research community needs to open up to give researchers from all over the world the chance to access the most important scientific information available. The *Journal of Back and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation* (JBMR) is actively involved in making this happen. Therefore, we recently decided to make all COVID-19-related content as well as all review papers freely available, without additional charges to authors. Furthermore, one impactful paper per issue will be also be granted free access in the ‘editor’s choice’ section, gaining its exposure to the research community.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, JBMR needed to say goodbye to our previous Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Dr. Hermie Hermens, who has served our journal for almost 20 years. Under his supervision, JBMR has grown into an established journal that is known for its pragmatic and clinically relevant character. We would like to express our gratitude for his tremendous efforts and opening the door for technologies, such as EMG and movement analyses, to be used in the daily routine of

clinical care. Prof. Hermens has been followed up by Remko Soer, PhD, a physiotherapist and human movement scientist specialized in pain and spine research and embedding technology in musculoskeletal health.

2021 perspective

We expect an exciting year for JBMR where we can carefully open up our daily routine of research again, while having learned important lessons from 2020 when it comes to accelerating research and the possibility of online treatments, meetings and events. JBMR especially welcomes studies that create these new ways of eHealth applications and other technologies thereby increasing treatment efficacy and decreasing the professional burden and treatment time.

We wish to express our gratitude to all professionals and scientists that have contributed to the establishment of our journal and welcome and invite researchers and clinicians working on new studies to improve the quality of back and musculoskeletal rehabilitation. We have suffered the pain from COVID-19, let’s now show resilience in the research community and gain from all losses.

Editor’s choice

We will start-off this new year with an issue filled with exiting research on musculoskeletal and back pain research both in more experimental pilot studies as well as some high quality randomized controlled trials and systematic reviews. These, from now on free to read, reviews provide us a meaningful insight in the current evidence of MSD-related therapies. The first study, carried out by Mendez-Rebolledo and colleagues [1], de-

scribes the optimal activation ratio of scapular muscles during closed chain exercises, which may be used immediately in clinical practice. Second, Robinson and colleagues [2] present a study on the current evidence of treating rotator cuff pathologies and shoulder osteoarthritis with non-operative orthobiologics. The Editor's choice has been granted to Won and colleagues [3] for their valuable study with long term follow up on neuromuscular stabilization on Cobb's angle in young patients with idiopathic scoliosis. We congratulate the authors on their performance on this study and have made their contribution freely available.

On behalf of the editorial team of JBMR, we wish you a great and healthy 2021.

Remko Soer, PT, MSc, PhD
Executive Editor
E-mail: r.soer@saxion.nl

References

- [1] Mendez-Rebolledo G, Morales-Verdugo J, Orozco-Chavez I, Habechian FAP, Padilla EL, de la Rosa FJB. Optimal activation ratio of the scapular muscles in closed kinetic chain shoulder exercises: A systematic review. *J Back Musculoskeletal Rehabil.* 2021; 34(1): 3-16.
- [2] Robinson DM, Eng C, Makovitch S, Rothenberg J, DeLuca S, Douglas S, Civitarese D, Borg-Stein J. Non-operative Orthobiologic Use for Rotator Cuff Disorders and Glenohumeral Osteoarthritis: A Systematic Review. *J Back Musculoskeletal Rehabil.* 2021; 34(1): 17-32.
- [3] Won SH, OH DW, Shen M. An 18-month follow-up study on the effect of a neuromuscular stabilization technique on Cobb's angle in adolescent idiopathic scoliosis: A single-blind, age-matched controlled trial. *J Back Musculoskeletal Rehabil.* 2021; 34(1): 87-93.