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Editorial

Continuously getting a bit more picky...

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With the start of the New Year 2019, *Radiotherapy & Oncology* continues to enjoy an excellent standing in the radiation oncology community as evidenced among others by the high number of downloads and citations, and in particular by a further increase in submissions by approximately 10% alone in 2018. This is more than we can additionally publish and it will come therefore as no surprise that we need to be even more selective in our evaluation process than in previous years. Our acceptance rates have therefore declined and probably will continue to do so in the coming years.

Radiotherapy & Oncology is an international flagship journal of our discipline and we aim at publishing the best 20–25% of the work from all areas of radiation oncology, covering clinical radiation oncology, medical radiation physics, radiobiology, imaging and information sciences relevant for radiation oncology, technical aspects of radiation therapy as well as more general oncology topics relevant for the further development of our field. Original papers on new developments, experimental and on prospective clinical studies will remain our key focus and we wish to further increase the proportion of such work in the journal in the coming years. However, retrospective studies can also be of important value for our field, and therefore may be considered if they provide novel and important insights, include case-control data, and provide sound statistical analysis and interpretation. Often retrospective studies will profit from a multicenter approach which both increases sample sizes and reduces bias. Moreover, retrospective studies on clinical stratification algorithms or prognostic and predictive biomarkers will also require state-of-the-art methods in the analysis and independent validation [1].

In 2018 we introduced a new series “*Data Science in Radiation Oncology*”. Our first contribution to the topic “Why is the validation of prognostic models important?” [2] was published in the July issue and the second paper on “Competing risks in survival data analysis” [3] is published in this issue. These state-of-the-art papers serve as a guide for authors and researchers in radiation oncology by focusing on recurring problems in the evaluation of radiation oncology studies. We expect the new series to add to our ongoing efforts to foster expertly chosen and executed cutting edge analytical methodology in our journal. These efforts are also supported by a higher rate of statistical reviews of new submissions than in the past. We urge authors to make use of our “Data

Science series”. We also strongly recommend to involve experienced data scientists in the authors’ teams at an as early as possible time point during the study or optimally already at the stage of the study design.

At the other end of the spectrum our *First-in-Human* series is gaining momentum and we published two exciting articles [4,5] in 2018. We continue to encourage authors to submit their highly innovative articles describing milestone achievements in transferring preclinical research to very early clinical evaluation to this section of our journal.

Apart from the revision of our referee questionnaire to facilitate the peer review process and enabling authors to submit their references in any style or format as long as the style is consistent, the most important change that will be of interest to authors is the implementation of article-based publishing as of the February issue 2019. Article-based publishing allows articles to be published in their final form with volume, issue and page numbers before the entire issue is completed, further reducing the time to publication.

Finally, we would like to thank our senior editors, editorial board members and our many reviewers for their valuable time and support over the past 12 months. Their contribution has not only ensured the journal’s continuous success but has also helped us reduce the average time from submission to first decision to less than 30 days. In appreciation of their highly valued work the names of our reviewers of 2018 can be found in the list that appeared at the end of the November issue.

We wish all readers, authors, reviewers and co-editors of *Radiotherapy & Oncology* a successful New Year 2019!

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