

# Marking the first decade of *Andrology*—Conception and early development of the journal

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The European Academy of Andrology (EAA) celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2022. An important part of the Academy's history is its scientific publishing activity, which started with the *International Journal of Andrology* (*Int J Androl*), and continued with *Andrology*, the journal created and overseen jointly by the EAA and the American Society of Andrology (ASA). The year 2022 marks the first decade of existence of *Andrology*, which opened for submissions in the spring of 2012 and published its first issue in December 2012—in time to be presented at the 7th European Congress of Andrology in Berlin, Germany. The 10th volume of the journal is close to completion, and the past and current Chief Editors use this opportunity to look back at the first decade of *Andrology*.

## 1 | THE BIRTH AND FIRST YEARS OF ANDROLOGY

After two decades of sponsoring competing society journals, the leaders of the EAA and the ASA made a ground-breaking decision to merge the *Int J Androl* and the *Journal of Andrology* (ASA), creating one journal of high scientific quality and world-wide reach and importance. The underlying premise of the journal was that both societies had memberships with complementary foci and expertise, and that the progress of the field of andrology would benefit from a top tier journal that would lead the way in disseminating and promoting research to facilitate progress in both the basic sci-

ence of male reproduction, as well as translational aspects of patient care.

The very long 'conception' period of the idea until the merger of the journals involved numerous formal and informal discussions by leaders of both societies, but was largely driven by Marvin (Marv) Meistrich and Ilpo Huhtaniemi, the respective chairs of the publishing oversight committees of ASA and EAA.<sup>1</sup> After building trust and a common vision, the merger was officially agreed upon in 2011, at which point the two societies appointed the two Co-Editors-in-Chief, Ewa Rajpert-De Meyts, the last Editor of the EAA's *Int J Androl* and Douglas T. Carrell, representing the ASA.

Looking back at the months of the 'gestation' period—which was the transition from two separate journals to one, Ewa and Doug recall several meetings with Marv and Ilpo, devoted to designing the strategy and publishing priorities of *Andrology*. These discussions were essential in assuaging the concerns of many members and leaders of the two societies who were essentially concerned that their societies' priorities and identities may be lost in the merger. Allen Stevens, the Managing Editor representing Wiley Publishing, was integral in these early discussions, as well as in formulating contracts and other publishing practicalities. Ewa and Doug had hectic work defining the journal's scope, updating the journal databases, guidelines, numerous other documents and hundreds of automatic replies within the electronic system initially designed for *Int J Androl*. They were greatly assisted by Editorial

Assistant Andy Beare and a technical team at Wiley. Editorial Board candidates with international scope and balancing fields of expertise were selected and installed, with equal representation of Europe and the USA, and a few Editors representing other continents. We are all proud that so many experts around the world accepted the invitation to serve the new journal. Finally, on the 1 April 2012 the new website and the manuscript submission portal formally opened—*Andrology* was born.

In the inaugural issue of *Andrology* (January 2013), the Editors presented the main reasons behind the journal merger and the mission statement: to provide a rapid and fair evaluation of clinical and basic andrology-related manuscripts, and to strive for the best possible quality and impact of the journal.<sup>2</sup> The andrology community responded, and more than 400 papers were received in 2013. The number of submitted manuscripts increased in subsequent years (>530 in 2016), reaching an avalanche size caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020. However, this growth was not easy and required nurturing of some authors to submit to *Andrology*, a process that often took time and patience and was benefited by the demonstrable improvement of the quality of the journal itself. Indeed, success breeds success, and the early days were largely occupied with work to demonstrate continual improvement in the journal itself, both in practical aspects of manuscript processing, as well as the most important work of the editors, to constantly nurture quality in the manuscripts accepted for publication via strict acceptance guidelines and rigorous editorial review.

In 2014, *Andrology Awards*<sup>3</sup> were introduced for the best paper published within the calendar year (the list of the recipients is provided in the Appendix below), each one announced by an editorial published in *Andrology*, and the recipient's presentation at alternating society meetings. The Editors also tried to make the journal more attractive to the readers by increasing the number of editorials and introducing a new series of essays '*Lessons Learned in Andrology*' in which experienced andrologists and basic scientists in the field of male reproduction shared their wisdom with the young scientists.<sup>3</sup> Several renowned scientists accepted this challenge and provided often very thoughtful and entertaining essays, including: M. Okabe, N.E. Skakkebaek, M. Simoni, D. de Kretser, R.M. Sharpe, R.P. Amann, E. Drobnis, R.J. Aitken, A. Belker, G. Forti, L.I. Lipshultz, G.D. Palermo and K. Steger.

## 2 | EDITORIAL EVOLUTION AND EFFORTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF SUBMISSIONS

In 2017 the new Chief Editor, Manuela Simoni was appointed by EAA and joined Doug Carrell behind the wheel of *Andrology*. In 2018, she recruited Daniele Santi, a young andrologist from Modena, now serving as an Associate Editor, who skillfully performed triage of submitted manuscripts and carried out other tasks of the Editorial Assistant, replacing Andy Beare. Doug completed his long editor service at the end of 2019. Manuela then reorganised and streamlined the editorial work, implementing a governance based on one Editor-in-Chief and

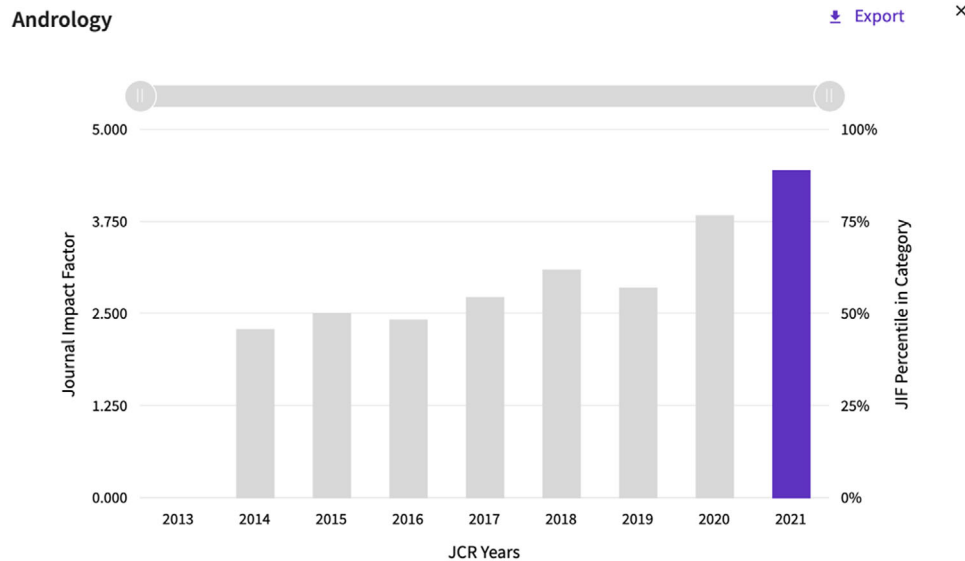
one Deputy Editor, positions held for 2 years alternatively by the Editors designated by the two societies. Manuela became in 2020 the first sole Editor-in-Chief taking ultimate decisions, and sharing the well-designed editorial tasks and responsibilities with the new Deputy Editor, Marie-Claude Hofmann, appointed by ASA. In 2020 a new editorial office of *Andrology* was set up at Wiley with the assistance limited to technical handling of the manuscripts and monitoring the review process. Marie-Claude became Editor-in-Chief in 2022, when Manuela stepped down and Aleksander Giwercman started as new Deputy Editor appointed by EAA.

During her 5-year-long term, Manuela put a strong emphasis on the quality standards required for submissions to *Andrology*, and introduced a compulsory submission checklist and other measures.<sup>4</sup> Additional steps to improve quality such as detecting papermill submissions or manipulated figures were implemented in 2022 by Marie-Claude. Altogether, this enhanced stringency, combined with a good impact factor, did not diminish the rate of manuscript submission and significantly improved the quality of the manuscripts we received for the past 2 years.

Manuela and Marie-Claude also pushed strongly for special thematic article collections, including a series devoted to COVID-19 aspects of male health. Since the beginning of the journal, the Editors worked to compile special thematic issues, which are usually well cited. All together, nine special thematic issues were published so far, all co-edited by expert Guest Associate Editors:

1. 'Genetic aspects of Male Infertility', ed. C. Krausz, D.T. Carrell (2014).
2. 'Testicular Cancer', ed. E. Rajpert-De Meyts (2015).
3. 'Endocrine Disruption and Reproductive Health', ed. A.M. Andersson (2016).
4. 'Testicular Germ Cell Cancer', ed. E. Rajpert-De Meyts (2019).
5. 'Epididymis', ed. B. Robaire (2019).
6. 'Lifelong cell-cell interactions in the testis: A driver for male infertility', ed. V. Papadopoulos (2020).
7. 'Late-onset Hypogonadism', eds. G. Corona, C. Krausz (2020).
8. 'Imaging in Andrology', eds. A.M. Isidori, V.S. Dogra, P.S. Sidhu (2021).
9. 'Transgender Health', ed. M.S. Irwig (2021).

Three thematic issues are currently being assembled: 'Andrological Aspects of Diabetes Mellitus' (eds. G. Rastrelli & D. Santi), 'Small RNAs in Andrology' (ed. K. Almstrup) and 'Sperm DNA fragmentation' (eds. S. Lewis & R.J. Aitken). Under strong impulse by Manuela and in collaboration with Professor Emmanuele Jannini, University of Rome Tor Vergata, the current Editors recently implemented a new section of the journal, called 'Andrology and Humanities', which is dedicated to manuscripts emphasizing the role of andrology in a broad societal and cultural context.<sup>5</sup> We hope that this initiative will widen the knowledge and understanding of our specialty and humanistic aspects related to clinical andrology.



**FIGURE 1** The evolution of the impact factor of *Andrology* (from Clarivate).

### 3 | THE IMPACT FACTOR

The impact factor (IF) is not the most decisive aspect defining the quality of any given journal. But, the reality is that submitting authors weigh this bibliometric index very highly because of the pressure of their academic evaluators. *Andrology* started as a newborn baby, with a clean slate and no IF. The good IFs of the two previous journals were not accepted to be transferred to *Andrology* by the Web of Science of the Institute of the Scientific Information (ISI), now Clarivate. Hence, we had to wait in the purgatory of 'no-IF journals' for 2 years. The first 1-year IF arrived in 2015: 2.298, followed by the first full 2-year IF: 2.427, which were modest and lower than we had expected, however, later on our IF and other bibliometric indices slowly but steadily rose (Fig. 1). In part, the rise was an effect of publication of the European clinical guidelines, and the above-mentioned special thematic issues. The greatest recent increase to the respectable 4.456 (for 2021) can be mainly credited to the determination of the third Chief Editor, Manuela Simoni, helped by her Deputy Editor, Marie-Claude Hofmann, who made it one of their main priorities.

### 4 | THE BOARD OF ASSOCIATE EDITORS

The Chief Editors could not process numerous submissions without help of the international team of Associate Editors, whose great expertise in many different areas of clinical and basic andrology was indispensable in the process of selecting competent referees and evaluating the scientific quality of submitted papers. We take the opportunity to thank the Associate Editors serving *Andrology*, some of whom are continuing to the second decade: R. John Aitken (2012–2016), John Amory (2012–present), Tadashi Baba (2012–2017), Elisabetta Baldi (2012–2021), Lars Björndahl (2019–present), Arthur Burnett (2012–present), Douglas T. Carrell (2018–2022), Gail Cornwall (2012–

2014), Patricia Cuasnicu (2012–present), Gert Dohle (2012–2017), Michael Eisenberg (2016–present), Sandro Esteves (2022–present), Alberto Ferlin (2018–present), Aleksander Giwercman (2012–2021), Kathleen Hwang (2019–present), Michael Irwig (2022–present), Niels Jørgensen (2019–present), Zdravko Kamenov (2019–present), Sabine Kliesch (2019–2020), Maciej Kurpisz (2022–present), Kate L. Loveland (2012–present), Andreas Meinhardt (2018–present), Monica Muratori (2022–present), Cristian O'Flaherty (2019–present), Rafael Oliva (2016–2019), Peter J. O'Shaughnessy (2012–2019), Gail Prins (2012–2014), Ewa Rajpert-De Meyts (2018–2021), Andrea Salonia (2020–present), Peter Schlegel (2012–2016), Rodolfo Rey (2012–2015), Daniele Santi (2022–present), Katja Teerds (2019–present), Frank Tüttemann (2018–present), Pablo Visconti (2018–present), Armand Zini (2012–2017), and Michael Zitzmann (2012–2018).

### 5 | REVIEWERS OF THE DECADE 2012–2022

We extend our gratitude to all reviewers who over the years evaluated hundreds of papers submitted to our journal. It is impossible to run a reputable scientific journal without this unpaid and time-consuming work done in the name of science and the public good. Our special thanks go to the busiest and most dedicated referees, most of them serving on the Board of Reviewing Editors, who since the launch of *Andrology* evaluated the greatest numbers of submitted manuscripts (the number of completed evaluations until July 2022 is shown in parentheses):

Giovanni Corona (107), Kenneth Aston (93), Monica Muratori (93), Francesco Lotti (91), Michael Eisenberg (70), Dimitrios Goulis (64), Luke Simon (63), Ranjith Ramasamy (62), Lars Björndahl (58), Sara Marchiani (52), Daniele Santi (50), Joël Drevet (48), Sandro Esteves (48), Emmanuele Jannini (47), David Handelsman (43), Maciej Kurpisz (43), Ates Kadioglu (42), Giulia Rastrelli (40), Andrea Salonia (38), Rex

Hess (37), Sandro Francavilla (36), Robert McLachlan (36), Alan Diekmann (35), Ralf Henkel (35), William Huang (35), Ilpo Huhtaniemi (35), Andrea Sansone (35), Trevor Cooper (34), Trine Haugen (34), Jihong Liu (34), Juris Erenpreiss (33), Paolo Capogrosso (32), James Hotaling (32), Pablo Visconti (32), Joel Marmar (31), Biljana Musicki (31), Stefan Schlatt (31), Gunapala Shetty (31), Lara Tamburrino (31), Ahmed El-Sakka (30) and Farid Saad (30).

## 6 | FINAL REMARKS LOOKING TO THE NEXT DECADE

We are proud of the achievements of *Andrology* during the first decade. We think that we are well on the way to reaching the original goals of the new journal—achieving the best possible quality and impact in the field of andrology. We also look forward to meeting new challenges ahead. The current Chief Editor, Marie-Claude Hofmann and the new Deputy Editor, Aleksander Giwercman will strive to keep improving the journal for the benefit of the two organizations, EAA and ASA, entire andrology community, but also the society at large. Issues related to male reproductive function and health have a broad interest reaching far outside the research world. The future will surely bring an increasing demand for using social media and striving for making difficult research questions easily understandable for non-experts. We have the ambition to make *Andrology* as one of the frontrunners in this area of communication. Another important task is to train new excellent reviewers and editors, aiming not only to secure a perfect generation change but also to additionally improve the quality of the review process and thereby also that of the papers published in the journal.

At the 10 years anniversary of *Andrology* we are looking forward to the next years of pubertal growth and a maturation of the journal!

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Editors of *Andrology* thank the Managing Editors appointed by Wiley, who during the first decade provided competent assistance in all aspects of scientific publishing: Allen Stevens, Silvana Losito, Thomas Trier-Mork and Sarah Tatum George.

### APPENDIX

#### *Andrology* awards 2013–2021

These awards were established to distinguish the best article published in *Andrology* within the preceding year.<sup>3</sup> The winning article is selected by the Board of the Associate Editors and the Chief Editors. The recipient—either the first or the last author—presents a short talk at a European Congress of Andrology or an annual meeting of the ASA (alternating), with all costs reimbursed jointly by EAA, ASA and Wiley. During the years of COVID-19 pandemics (2020–2021), which made face-to-face meetings impossible, the award presentations were delivered remotely.

**2013:** Shetty G, Uthamanthil RK, Zhou W, Shao SH, Weng CC, Tailor RC, Hermann BP, Orwig KE & Meistrich ML. *Hormone suppression with GnRH antagonist promotes spermatogenic recovery from transplanted spermatogonial stem cells in irradiated cynomolgus monkeys*. *Andrology* 2013;

1, 886–898. Presented at the 8th European Congress of Andrology (ECA2014) in Barcelona, Spain.

**2014:** Maselli J, Hales BF & Robaire B. *Paternal exposure to testis cancer chemotherapeutics alters sperm fertilizing capacity and affects gene expression in the eight-cell stage rat embryo*. *Andrology* 2014; 2, 259–266. Presented in 2015 at the 40th Annual ASA Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah.

**2015:** Rohayem J, Fricke R, Czeloth K, Mallidis C, Wistuba J, Krallmann C, Zitzmann M & Kliesch S. *Age and markers of Leydig cell function, but not of Sertoli cell function predict the success of sperm retrieval in adolescents and adults with Klinefelter's syndrome*. *Andrology* 2015; 3, 868–875. Presented at the 9th European Congress of Andrology (ECA2016) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

**2016:** Rocca MS, Pecile V, Cleva L, Speltra E, Selice R, Di Mambro A, Foresta C & Ferlin A. *The Klinefelter syndrome is associated with high recurrence of copy number variations on the X chromosome with a potential role in the clinical phenotype*. *Andrology* 2016; 4, 328–334. Presented in 2017 at the 42nd Annual ASA Meeting in Miami, Florida.

**2017:** Jenkins TG, James ER, Alonso DF, Hoidal JR, Murphy PJ, Hotaling JM, Cairns BR, Carrell DT & Aston KI. *Cigarette smoking significantly alters sperm DNA methylation patterns*. *Andrology* 2017; 5: 1089–1099. Presented at the 10th European Congress of Andrology (ECA2018) in Budapest, Hungary.

**2018:** Musicki B, Karakus S, Akakpo W, Silva FH, Liu J, Chen H, Zirkin BR & Burnett AL. *Testosterone replacement in transgenic sickle cell mice controls priapic activity and upregulates PDE5 expression and eNOS activity in the penis*. *Andrology* 2018; 6: 184–191. Presented in 2019 at the 44th Annual ASA Meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

**2019:** Gianfrilli D, Ferlin A, Isidori AM, Garolla A, Maggi M, Pivonello R, Santi D, Sansone A, Balercia G, Granata ARM, Sinisi A, Lanfranco F, Pasqualetti P, Foresta C, Lenzi A; 'Amico-Andrologo' Study Group. *Risk behaviours and alcohol in adolescence are negatively associated with testicular volume: results from the Amico-Andrologo survey*. *Andrology* 2019; 7: 769–777. Presented at the virtual triple e-Congress of Andrology, endorsed by the EAA (11th e-ECA2020), the International Society of Andrology (ISA) and the German Society of Andrology (replacing the planned face-to-face event in Münster, Germany).

**2020:** Araujo TF, Friedrich C, Grangeiro CHP, Martelli LR, Grzeziuk JD, Emich J, Wyrwoll MJ, Kliesch S, Simões AL & Tüttelmann F. *Sequence analysis of 37 candidate genes for male infertility: challenges in variant assessment and validating genes*. *Andrology* 2020; 8: 434–441. Presented in 2021 at the virtual 46th Annual Conference of the American Society of Andrology.

**2021:** Exceptionally, two *Andrology* Awards were given, both presented at the 12th European Congress of Andrology (ECA2022) in Barcelona, Spain.

—In the COVID-19 category: Salonia A, Pontillo M, Capogrosso P, Gregori S, Tassara M, Boeri L, Carezzi C, Abbate C, Cignoli D, Ferrara AM, Cazzaniga W, Rowe I, Ramirez GA, Tresoldi C, Mushtaq J, Locatelli M, Santoleri L, Castagna A, Zangrillo A, De Cobelli F, Tresoldi M, Landoni G, Rovere-Querini P, Ciceri F, Montorsi F. *Severely low testosterone in males with COVID-19: A case-control study*. *Andrology* 2021; 9: 1043–1052.

-In the basic/translational andrology category: Abu-Halima M, Belkacemi A, Ayesh BM, Simone Becker L, Sindiani AM, Fischer U, Hammadeh M, Keller A, Meese E. *MicroRNA-targeting in spermatogenesis: Over-expressions of microRNA-23a/b-3p and its affected targeting of the genes ODF2 and UBQLN3 in spermatozoa of patients with oligoasthenozoospermia*. *Andrology* 2021; 9: 1137–1144.

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