

Future Directions

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As we adapt to new ways of living, it is interesting and gratifying to see how our community has contributed towards paving the way to a new—but different—future. Many of you are directly involved in healthcare, and so have been at the frontlines of the struggles that have been with us for 2 years now. As a community involved in education and research, some of you have been key to advancing our understanding of how we can stay safe and healthy—especially during travel. A number of COVID-19 related manuscripts were submitted, and ultimately published in the Blue Journal during the last year, and more manuscripts are either forthcoming or in the editorial process.

Last April, we published an article by Kara Cave and colleagues (2021) on aircrew safety and performance while using protective masks.² Results indicated that speech intelligibility for aircrew and air traffic controllers was maintained within an acceptable range under the conditions studied. Last July, we published 'Adapting Disease Prevention Protocols for Human Spaceflight During COVID-19' by Eric Petersen and colleagues.⁴ Co-authors include SpaceX chief medical officer Anil Menon and SpaceX founder Elon Musk. In the article, the authors describe the successful commercial implementation of the NASA Health Stabilization Program with adjustments required during the COVID-19 pandemic, with protocols that allowed for the identification and removal of potentially infectious persons from the program.

In September we published 'COVID-19 Vaccine and Fitness to Fly' by Daniel Gabbai and colleagues.³ In the article the authors conclude with recommendations on temporary grounding following first and second vaccine doses. Last October 'General Aviation Flight Safety During the COVID-19 Pandemic' by Douglas Boyd¹ was published, revealing little evidence of diminished flight safety for light aircraft operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional manuscripts are forthcoming in the coming months, demonstrating our community's commitment to adding to our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted space and air travel and what some measures might be to combat the pandemic's negative effects.

Regarding some Journal news, there will be some important changes happening this coming year for the Journal. Currently,

regular AsMA membership entitles members to a hardcopy of the Journal *and* access to an electronic version. Many members (including me) rarely read the hardcopy of the Journal. Most associations that provide journals to their members provide a hardcopy version of the journal *or* an electronic version—but not both. For practical reasons—and environmental concerns—many associations have transitioned to electronic versions. During 2022—likely midyear—AsMA members will receive the electronic version of the journal only. For an additional annual charge, members can also receive a hardcopy of the journal.

A main benefit of this change has to do with how the journal appears. Currently, color figures are an option for authors, but at a fairly steep cost of \$900 for the first figure. It should not be surprising then that few AMHP articles are printed in color. Once the electronic version of the Journal becomes the version of record, color images will cost much less—around \$60. The color images will appear in electronic and hardcopy versions. For those who opt in to receiving a hardcopy of the Journal for an additional cost (estimated to be around \$100/year), the look and feel of the Journal will be of a higher quality. In short, the journal will have an enhanced appearance, and given the much lower cost for color figures, it will also hopefully be more colorful as more authors opt to include color figures in their articles.

Some readers may be interested to know that some of us at the Journal have decided to voluntarily transition out of our roles. Pam Day has been with the Journal and AsMA since February 1980 and will serve one more year as the Managing Editor starting in January 2022. Debra Sventek will also serve one additional year as Assistant to the Editor after coming on board to the AMHP team in 2011. After coming on board as editor-in-chief in January 2010, I have decided to end my tenure after two more years making my end date December 31, 2023. These may seem like long advance notices—and it is not goodbye yet, but all of us are committed to smooth

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transitions that will help to ensure the health and future of the Blue Journal.

As always, thank you to all the dedicated efforts of our volunteer referees who contribute to the success of the Journal throughout the year! Thanks also to the Editorial Board of the Journal who I rely on extensively throughout the year. I encourage you to submit your work to AMHP or serving as a reviewer. Please stay safe and be well and do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or comments you may have at: AMHPjournal@asma.org.

Wishing you a happy and productive 2022!

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