

Embracing change

In the last year and a half, our lives have changed dramatically. *Nature Structural & Molecular Biology* has also changed. Here we share some of the positive changes that we are embracing.

We cannot sugarcoat it: it has been a tough couple of years for everyone. The global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has changed our lives, possibly forever. Almost two years of the ongoing pandemic have resulted in devastating loss of life, [post-acute COVID-19 syndrome](#) continues to affect us, the isolation of multiple lockdowns has been very hard to endure and, while many countries are carrying out successful vaccination efforts and looking forward to economic recovery, this is not yet the case in most of the world. We were forced to change how we live and spend our free time, how we work and how we interact with each other. While adjusting to imposed change is usually a hard process, this can also be an opportunity for us to embrace the things that changed for the better.

The need to develop effective treatments and vaccines for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19 has resulted in an acceleration of the discovery, communication and [publication](#) of scientific findings. The speed at which multiple, effective vaccines have been developed is a beacon of hope, reminding us how powerful and effective science can be when governments, funders and scientists join forces to achieve a common goal. Now, we should all redouble our efforts in applying the same urgency to the [grand societal challenges](#) the world faces and finding science-based solutions to our very real real-world problems. Within academic publishing, the near universal embrace of preprint sharing of COVID-19-related

findings is also, we hope, a positive lesson that will endure.

A big consequence of the restrictions on travel and in-person meetings is a near-total end of in-person conferences in the last 18 months. Editors have dearly missed meeting scientists and discussing exciting science in person. While virtual conferences do not allow the same level of personal interactions, they have democratized access to these usually very expensive meetings. As we are slowly coming out of lockdown and resuming travel, we hope that science presentations can continue to be regularly shared in some virtual format that is available to a broader audience. Furthermore, while we all are probably suffering from some virtual chat fatigue, we should not completely abandon this new tool. In addition to enabling many potential societal benefits, like [Telehealth](#), virtual conference platforms have allowed editors to interact regularly with our authors, reviewers and readers ‘face-to-face’, irrespective of geographic location. We will certainly continue to do so going forward. It has been lovely to see you!

Nature Structural & Molecular Biology has also changed as a journal in 2021. For studies submitted from January 2021 onwards, we are happy to offer our authors of primary research papers two publishing options: the traditional subscription publication and open access (OA). Nature and the Nature Research journals, including *Nature Structural & Molecular Biology*, are now [transformative journals](#), meaning that, while we still offer subscription-based publication, we are aiming to grow the

number of OA papers that we publish each year and, ultimately, become a fully OA journal. Most of our authors still have the option to publish under the subscription model, while authors working in institutions with [Transformative Agreements](#) with Nature and the Nature Portfolio journals will be able to publish manuscripts OA at no extra cost. We remain committed to working with our authors to find a solution that works for them, with the costs of OA publishing for many of our authors already being supported by many funding bodies, including those who are members of cOAlition S. We believe that, in the long run, the transition to OA publishing will be the best outcome for the scientific community and society at large.

Finally, the [editorial team](#) at *Nature Structural & Molecular Biology* has also changed quite a bit in the last year. The journal may have some new faces, but our mission remains the same: to publish the most impactful studies aiming to provide functional understanding of how molecular components in the cell work together. We are eager to work with our authors, reviewers and readers to publish the best science in the field and to promote, support and grow our community. We want *Nature Structural & Molecular Biology* to be the exciting, diverse and forward-thinking journal that you, our readers, want to read every month. If you have not yet met us, please reach out. We look forward to meeting you! □

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