

# Nature Human Behaviour turns five

On the occasion of our fifth anniversary, we look back and reflect on the journal's first five years of life.

The first issue of *Nature Human Behaviour* was published this month five years ago. In that inaugural issue, we set an agenda for the journal<sup>1,2</sup> — we wanted *Nature Human Behaviour* to stand for robust, rigorous scientific practices and to provide a multidisciplinary forum for research that addresses questions that matter for science and the real world.

As part of our commitment to rigorous science, our first issue announced our adoption of the Registered Report format<sup>3</sup>. The format aims at reducing publication bias and promoting honest, transparent research practices by making editorial decisions for acceptance in principle before the data have been analysed and the results are known. Five years later, we have received more than 300 Stage 1 Registered Reports and have published 10 Stage 2 manuscripts. Do take a look at our [dedicated collection](#), which includes all our published Registered Reports and other relevant content, as well as our [figshare space](#) where we post accepted Stage 1 protocols.

Over the years, we have adopted policies that prioritize credible, transparent science<sup>3-7</sup> and have put into practice a redefined concept of what constitutes a substantial scientific advance<sup>8</sup>. Novelty is only one way in which science moves forward. Robust confirmation or disconfirmation is equally important and we have prioritized the publication of large-scale replication studies<sup>9,10</sup>, highly powered studies that report null results<sup>11</sup> as well as studies that provide advances in evidence by virtue of being of unprecedented scale or rigour.

From the outset, we have also intended the journal to provide a platform for the discussion of issues that matter to the scientific community. An early [focus](#) examined views on and consequences of changes in the definition of a clinical trial by the US National Institute of Health. In 2019, we focused on [publication pressures](#) on PhD students, while in 2020 and 2021 we featured a broad range of [contributions](#) on racism, discrimination and exclusion in science.

Human behaviour is complex, multifaceted and studied by a range of disciplines across the social and natural sciences. We have always welcomed research from any discipline that addresses an important question for human behaviour and have thus far published research from



Credit: Emmanuel Faure / The Image Bank / Getty

34 distinct disciplines. These disciplines do not just stand side-by-side in our tables of contents — we have actively sought to encourage fruitful exchanges among different disciplines, as well as the submission of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. For example, some of the most pressing societal challenges are essentially challenges in cooperation. Research on cooperation is fundamentally multidisciplinary, involving work in evolutionary biology, political science, economics, psychology, anthropology and more. Our [focus on cooperation](#) brought together researchers from a broad range of disciplines to synthesize what is known and what is yet to be answered about the evolution of cooperation, and when and how it succeeds and fails.

The past two years have been dominated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The scientific community's response to the pandemic has been nothing short of extraordinary. To assist the dissemination of important work relevant to addressing this unique challenge, we introduced fast-track peer review and publication of time-sensitive work, especially in early stages of the pandemic. We continue to

prioritize for publication COVID-19 research and nonresearch content that is immediately relevant for policy, and have created a continuously updated [collection](#) of all relevant content that is free to access for the duration of the pandemic.

To celebrate our 5th anniversary, we invited 22 leading experts in some of the key disciplines we cover to share their visions for the future of their disciplines<sup>12</sup>. If you read one opinion piece in *Nature Human Behaviour* this year, make it this one. The Feature provides an extremely rich and insightful picture of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for human behaviour research. One thing that stands out from these contributions is how frequently interdisciplinary collaboration and sharing of methods and conceptual frameworks is seen by our experts as key to progress in their disciplines.

Over the journal's lifetime, we have received more than 13,000 submissions from 111 different countries. We owe a debt of gratitude to all authors who entrust their work to us and to the 5,305 unique reviewers who have helped us with the evaluation of submitted manuscripts. For us as editors, each published manuscript is not just a job, but a labour of care and excitement about the work. In an additional anniversary Feature<sup>13</sup>, past and present editors of the journal discuss some of their favourite papers over the past five years. The highlighted work spans the journal's brief history and each contribution provides a glimpse of what matters to us as editors.

A lot has happened over the past five years — the rise of populism in several corners of the world, new and continuing humanitarian crises, racial reckoning, a worsening climate crisis without sufficient political will to address it decisively, and a pandemic. The world may not be a better place today than it was five years ago, but, if anything, current events have brought into sharp relief just how important research into human behaviour is in addressing our most pressing societal challenges. □

Published online: 27 January 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01299-6>

## References

1. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* 1, 0033 (2017).
2. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* 1, 0034 (2017).
3. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* 3, 1237 (2019).

4. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **4**, 1 (2020).
5. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **5**, 175 (2021).
6. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **5**, 965–966 (2021).
7. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **4**, 665 (2020).
8. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **3**, 1127–1128 (2019).
9. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **2**, 601 (2018).
10. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **4**, 559 (2020).
11. *Nat. Hum. Behav.* **3**, 197 (2019).
12. Box-Steffensmeier, J. et al. *Nat. Hum. Behav.*, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01275-6> (2022).
13. Antusch, S. et al. *Nat. Hum. Behav.*, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01277-4> (2022).