



Bringing community to our pages

In an effort to bring to our pages some of the vibrant discussion of cancer research that happens during in-person or online journal club meetings, we are now publishing Journal Clubs — an article type in which researchers discuss research papers of their choice with the intention of alerting our readers to articles that have a special significance to them and the field.

Scientists love talking about their research. Meeting researchers is an excellent way for us editors to learn what keeps the minds of researchers busy and where current thinking about fields in cancer research is going. In almost every meeting we have with a cancer scientist, they mention their collaborators' names or names of other scientists whose work they find interesting, and these names stick with us. For researchers, hearing about other researchers can lead to learning about new science and forging new collaborations. For editors, learning about the researchers whose work you admire can help expand our pool of potential reviewers as well as potential authors. It can contribute to increasing the diversity of researchers whose work is featured in our pages. We know that expanding the author and referee pool will bring many benefits. Not only will it bring in fresh perspectives to our editorial process, but it will also address referee and author 'fatigue' — something we know from experience influences whether our invitations are accepted.

We typically get to know scientists through their publications, conference talks, lab visits and word-of-mouth. Without or with reduced travelling during and after the pandemic, networking and learning about research takes different forms. A lot of previous in-person interaction has moved online, including journal clubs. This setting allows researchers and trainees from different fields in cancer research to come together and discuss papers that interest them and that they might not have known about otherwise. Also, this setting allows researchers to talk about what certain papers mean to them, and what inspired them to take the paths they did in their respective fields. These human stories underlie everything that makes our community as vibrant as it is. To attempt to capture some of that on paper, in this issue, we launch *Journal Clubs*, an article type you may have seen in some of our sister *Nature Reviews* journals. In these articles, researchers discuss older research papers of their choice with the intention of alerting our readers to articles that have a special significance to them and the field.

We have decided to publish Journal Clubs in collaboration with cancer research institutes (whose senior

researchers and trainees write the articles), on a long-term, alternating basis. After one year (featuring 12 Journal Clubs in total), the existing collaborations will end and new ones with different institutes around the world will be made. This collaboration allows us not only to forge and solidify relationships with these institutes and individual scientists, but also to provide a platform for scientists to highlight the topics in cancer research that are central to their own research and perspectives. These topics might be relevant to improving the lives of patients with cancer independently of where they live, or might be specific to more regional research that is important in different communities and geographical areas across the world. We want to hear from more scientists who are not yet in our network, and we want to know what research trends they think are most promising to help improve outcomes for patients with cancer.

For the first year, we are collaborating with the [Howard University Cancer Center, US \(HUCC\)](#) and with the [Morehouse School of Medicine Cancer Health Equity Institute, US \(MSMCHEI\)](#). In the first article of this series, Hassan Brim & Hassan Ashktorab (HUCC) discuss a paper on the microbiome in colorectal cancer metastasis¹. In the second article, Brian Rivers (MSMCHEI) highlights research on the positive impact of community patient outreach on participation of African Americans in cancer clinical trials². These two articles have centred around these researchers' work to address cancer disparities on the preclinical science and community levels, and we are excited to see what the 10 Journal Clubs yet to be published from scientists at HUCC and MSMCHEI will discuss.

We hope that Journal Clubs will be a space where diverse research topics and papers that have inspired and influenced members of our cancer research community are brought to the centre of attention and hopefully will inspire you as readers in your own paths.

1. Brim, H. & Ashktorab, H. Integrating microbiomics in cancer management. *Nat. Rev. Cancer* <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41568-021-00392-8> (2021).
2. Rivers, B. M. Towards cancer equity via patient outreach. *Nat. Rev. Cancer* <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41568-021-00404-7> (2021).

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