

## 15 years of urology at *Nature*: a celebration of collaboration

Improved tools for diagnosis, treatment and basic research into the mechanisms of urological disease have transformed our field over the past 15 years. However, building on these advances relies on continued collaboration, teamwork and data sharing across our speciality.

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In the 15 years since *Nature Reviews Urology* (*NRU*) was launched, we have published >1,400 articles, including >460 Reviews. Each of these articles, even those, like this one, written in-house by a single author, have relied on the input of a team of editors — manuscript, production and art — as well as editorial administration, proof-readers and the publishing team. When you consider our back half articles, which are peer-reviewed and go through our in-house developmental editing process, the need for a team approach to publishing becomes even clearer. We simply could not publish a journal without groups of authors working together to create a cohesive manuscript, the expertise of peer reviewers, and the willingness of our authors to work with us to refine and streamline their manuscript to produce what we believe amounts to the most comprehensive, clear and authoritative Reviews in the field. Thus, collaboration is integral to what we do at *NRU*.

This ability to work with others has always been an essential part of being a clinician or scientist. However, the past 15 years have seen this spirit manifest in a plethora of techniques and approaches that rely on openness and collaboration, with the common goal of improving research and patient care. For example, the engagement of urologists with social media platforms such as Twitter (launched in 2006) enables us to share our experiences, seek advice from our colleagues abroad and provide information for our patients.

At the other end of the collaboration spectrum, we can find international collaborations such as the CopMich Collaborative. CopMich began in 1994 as a shared research interest between Dana Ohl at the University of Michigan and Jens Sønksen at Herlev and Gentofte Hospital and the University of Copenhagen and became formalized with the creation of the CopMich core unit in 2015.

This relationship has now expanded to cover far more than andrology, and in August 2019 CopMich met in Nyborg near Copenhagen for their third symposium. Authors from the CopMich collaborative

have published over 60 papers, including two Reviews in *NRU*; in this issue, you can find two Comment articles — one by authors from Copenhagen<sup>1</sup> and one from Michigan<sup>2</sup>, which discuss how urology has changed in the past 15 years and their views for the future.

In addition to their goals to expand their longstanding collaboration and facilitate exchange of medical students, nurses and doctors, CopMich aims to perform collaborative urological research studies providing large patient volumes and big data. Over the past 15 years, the availability of big data and the willingness of researchers and clinicians to share their results and experiences have transformed urology. Our ability to access data from different populations, from different ethnic backgrounds, with different pathologies, socioeconomic factors and insurance status, offers us a previously unforeseen opportunity to understand urological disease and ultimately improve patient care.

Another paradigm shift in urological care that relies on the spirit of collaboration is the move towards shared decision-making. A literature search for “patient-reported outcome measures” pulls over 6,350 articles, the first of which was published in 2003; by contrast, nearly 1,100 articles containing these keywords have already been published in 2019. The concept of asking patients to take an active role in their own care was unheard of 15 years ago. Now, we actively encourage them to collaborate with their doctor in their treatment decisions.

The success of *NRU* and of international collaborations such as CopMich are great examples of the importance of working together towards a common goal. In urology — whether it be producing a Review, mining large data sets to better understand physiology and pathophysiology or treatment, actively sharing our researchers and experiences in person and via social media, or involving our patients in treatment decisions — our ultimate aim is always to improve patient care. It can only be achieved with active cooperation within and outside of our field. In urology, teamwork really does make the dream work.

1. Nolsoe, A. B. et al. *Nat. Rev. Urol.* <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41585-019-0241-z> (2019).
2. Ellimootil, C. *Nat. Rev. Urol.* <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41585-019-0239-6> (2019).

