EDITORIAL

2020—a year of changes

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2020 will be remembered as the year that brought us COVID-19. It is likely the pandemic will change the world in many ways. The experiences people have had during this crisis may change attitudes toward professional and personal matters. We have seen how vulnerable densely populated areas are when it comes to microbial infections, and how lowering the number of fatalities requires an instant and intelligent response driven by science. The health systems of almost all affected countries have been stressed to their limit or even beyond. Of course, in these difficult times, there are more important and pressing issues to discuss than the role of dental and maxillofacial imaging. Nevertheless, we are aware that many of us working in a clinical environment and dealing with infected patients have been working hard to do our jobs as well as possible under the challenging circumstances. Although dental and maxillofacial emergencies are generally a manageable problem, there are still a number of cases that require timely or even urgent treatment. Intraoral bleedings, infections resulting in abscesses or dental/facial trauma are typical examples of this, as are malignancies in the oral and facial region. Almost all of these issues require sufficient imaging for planning and managing the case. It appears that most of us working on patients were mainly restricted to such emergency cases over the last weeks and months. This demonstrates that the skills and expertise of dentomaxillofacial radiologists are valuable and essential even during a pandemic crisis.

The current COVID-19 crisis has also sparked technological trends and innovations that may have a lasting impact on dental medicine, and which may revolutionise and disrupt the direction of dental research and practice in the coming years. One of these

potentially disruptive technological changes is in the field of imaging. In the past, transmission of digital images and clinical records for distance diagnosis could only be done by email. Now, using a smartphone and applications such as WhatsApp, both patients and members of the dental team can benefit from technology to facilitate initial consultations and subsequent examinations in a more convenient and timely manner. Telecommunication with smartphone applications is especially helpful in communities where there are very few oral healthcare specialists (which is the case for oral and maxillofacial radiologists). Furthermore, use of real-time video conferencing for consultations is now possible through various applications such as FaceTime, Skype or Zoom, to stay connected not only locally but all over the globe. Currently, it seems unlikely that these changes will all be undone once the COVID-19 crisis is over. We're also looking forward to seeing these trends reflected in *DMFR* by future submissions and contributions.

Looking at the challenges and opportunities described above, it is clearly true that we have experienced difficult times keeping our work environments operating during this global crisis. However, we feel confident that our profession will continue to deal with the task at hand in the best possible way. The pandemic will end some day, hopefully in the near future, and may even facilitate and speed up relevant changes in our specialty. So, let's face the current challenges and maintain a positive attitude towards our healthcare profession. This will make the journey back to "normal" easier and it may offer many new opportunities.

Finally, on a personal note, Professor Ralf Schulze's service as Editor-in-Chief of *DMFR* has now come to an end. After a total of 9 years, he is looking for a change and also for new challenges. Professor Schulze has always enjoyed to serve the *DMFR* community as Editor of its main scientific journal, regardless of the large amount of work it has involved. After all, steering a scientific niche journal through a rapidly changing

time with a growing number of other journals emerging is also a very rewarding role.

We all thank him for his great achievements during his tenure. He has firmly established *DMFR* as the key scientific reference journal in the field of head and neck imaging. He is succeeded by Professor Michael M. Bornstein from the University Center for Dental Medicine Basel, Switzerland, who has now taken over

as Editor-in-Chief as of July 2020. Professor Bornstein is very honoured and also thankful to Professor Schulze and the *DMFR* community for the trust bestowed in him to lead the journal forward.

We both wish you all a safe and healthy remainder of 2020. Thank you for your continued support of the journal!

Sincerely,

Ralf Schulze
Past Editor *DMFR*

Michael M. Bornstein
New Editor *DMFR*