

A year of ups and downs

Cancer research and *Nature Reviews Cancer* have both experienced many highs and lows in 2018, and we look forward to what 2019 has in store.

Like pretty much everything, cancer research has experienced some highs and lows in 2018.

An obvious high was the awarding of the [Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine](#) to James Allison and Tasuku Honjo for discoveries that underpinned the development of immune checkpoint inhibitors for cancer therapy.

Lows included the resignation of Jose Baselga from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, following a failure to declare competing interests in numerous publications¹ and allegations of bullying and harassment by several prominent cancer researchers^{2–4}. However, it is our hope that increased attention to these lows will ultimately be a good thing, improving transparency in the reporting of both financial and non-financial competing interests and pushing research funders and institutes to introduce anti-bullying and harassment policies (as the National Science Foundation, Wellcome Trust and Cancer Research UK have done this year⁵).

In much smaller, perhaps less obvious ways, *Nature Reviews Cancer* has also been through some highs and lows in 2018.

In May we published an article by Mel Greaves discussing evidence supporting the hypothesis that infections early in life reduce the risk of childhood common B cell precursor acute lymphoblastic leukaemia development⁶. This received global media attention from nearly 100 news outlets, including BBC News and CNN, and was tweeted >600 times — all rather unusual for a review article. More recently, we have published two excellent article collections on [The Tumour Microenvironment](#) and on [Haematological Cancer](#) (joint with *Nature Reviews Clinical Oncology*) that we hope are useful to our readers.

We have also made some changes and introduced several new policies and initiatives on the journal to improve our services to our authors, peer reviewers and readers. Some of these are easily visible, such as a new-look website and changes to our article pages to improve readability and navigation within an article.

We've been making changes behind the scenes as well, with the ultimate aim of making the publication of an article quicker, more efficient and less manual. To achieve this, virtually every aspect of the post-acceptance copy editing and production process has changed. Perhaps not surprisingly, the introduction of new systems and workflows has been challenging, and we thank all of our authors for bearing with us while we address these issues.

On a more positive note, in late 2017 we began a trial to formally acknowledge the contribution of referees to the external peer review of manuscripts by naming referees on published articles, if both authors and referees opt in. After 12 months, we found that 82% of *Nature Reviews Cancer* authors and 70% of our referees opted in to this trial. Because of this high uptake and the positive feedback we received on the trial, this initiative will continue on the journal in 2019.

Also, in August we began requesting that all corresponding authors of accepted papers provide their Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier (ORCID). ORCIDs are included in the published article and are important to ensure that all authors are given unambiguous credit for their work.

In addition, increasing the diversity of our authors and peer reviewers has been on the editorial team's radar for some time, but we know we can do better. Therefore, we recently began reminding commissioned authors and peer reviewers who are unable to review an article that we strive towards a diverse demographic representation and to keep this in mind when they consider co-authors or recommend alternative reviewers.

Thank you to all of our readers and to those who wrote (or agreed to write) and peer reviewed articles for us in 2018. We are very much looking forward to sharing the content and special projects we have lined up for 2019.

1. Thomas, K. & Ornstein, C. Top Sloan Kettering Cancer doctor resigns after failing to disclose industry ties. *New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/13/health/jose-baselga-cancer-memorial-sloan-kettering.html> (2018).
2. Wadman, M. Leading Salk scientist resigns after allegations of harassment. *Science* <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aau4429> (2018).
3. Weale, S. Top cancer genetics professor quits job over bullying allegations. *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jul/17/top-cancer-genetics-professor-quits-job-over-bullying-allegations> (2018).
4. Marsh, S. & Devlin, H. Wellcome Sanger director apologises for management failings. *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/oct/30/wellcome-sanger-director-apologises-management-failings-few-women-senior-level> (2018).
5. Else, H. Leading cancer-research charity takes tough stance on bullying. *Nature* <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-07162-x> (2018).
6. Greaves, M. A causal mechanism for childhood acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. *Nat. Rev. Cancer* **18**, 471–484 (2018).

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Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/medicine/2018/summary/>
The Tumour Microenvironment: <https://www.nature.com/collections/tumourmicroenvironment>
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