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Interview with Michelle Leech, Co-Editor-in-Chief of the tipsRO journal



<https://www.tipsro.science/>

What is the scope of the tipsRO journal and what are the differences between it and other ESTRO journals?

The focus of Technical Innovations and Patient Support in Radiation Oncology (tipsRO), an open access journal published by the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO), is to bring together technology and patient care in the field of radiation oncology. The journal encompasses all topics of importance to radiation therapists (RTTs), oncology nurses, allied health professionals and all members of multidisciplinary teams, such as those who handle:

- treatment planning and workflows;
- treatment delivery;
- treatment verification;
- patient reported outcome measures;
- patient care;
- supportive care;
- personalisation of treatment;
- patient advocacy;
- risk management;
- radiotherapy quality management and control;
- radiotherapy audit; and
- policy development and management.

What sets tipsRO apart from other journals is its multidisciplinary nature. In tipsRO you will find papers that are published by all members of the radiation oncology team, not just RTTs and oncology nurses. tipsRO reflects the multidisciplinary nature of radiation oncology, which makes it such a successful branch of medicine. This multidisciplinary approach is reflected in the backgrounds of the editors-in-chief, Sara Faithfull from oncology nursing and me as an RTT.

When was the journal founded?

Work began on the journal in 2016 and the first issue was published in March 2017.

Have you published some special issues or do you have plans to in the future? If so, on what topics?

Online journals have greater flexibility to publish virtual special issues or special sections within issues than do traditional journals, and this is a strength of tipsRO. We have previously had special issues on RTT education and training (guest editors: Mary Coffey (adjunct professor, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland) and Eduardo Rosenblatt (radiation oncology consultant, Montserrat, Spain)) and image-guided radiation therapy (IGRT) and Adaptive radiation therapy (ART) (guest editors Helen McNair (research RTT at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and Institute of Cancer Research, London, UK) and Monica Buijs (Specialist RTT at NKI, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)). In June 2020, a special section on risk and quality management will be published, guest edited by Geoff Delaney (director of cancer services (South Western Sydney Local Health District)) and Mary Coffey. Later this year we will publish special issues on geriatric oncology and late effects of radiation therapy. In March 2021, we will have a special issue on advanced practice in radiation oncology. Our special issues focus on the topics that are of most interest to our wide readership and have impacts on their practice.

Have you published review articles? What were the topics?

To date, we have received very few review articles for consideration; we typically receive original articles. We are, however, very interested in receiving review articles and ask that potential authors consult our instructions for authors on how to prepare a review.

How many rounds of reviews does it typically take for papers to be accepted?

Most papers are reviewed in two rounds.

What can I do if I feel that the reviews or editorial decisions have been unfair? In other words, how do I appeal against a rejection?

If an author feels that they have received unfair reviews or that the editorial decision is unfair, they should write to the editors-in-chief (EIC). As we have two EICs, it is then possible for the EIC who did not handle the paper at the first stage to review the procedure and adjudicate independently. I am happy to report that we have not experienced such a scenario to date at tipsRO.

How should I address reviews that have “missed the point”? Or reviews in which the authors of the reviews have contradicted each other?

It is rare for reviews that ‘missed the point’ to be sent back to authors. One of the most important functions of the EIC is to check reviews and to ensure that selected reviewers are experts in the field of the submitted manuscript. As an EIC, if reviews conflict, the use of multiple reviewers gives better clarity on what needs to be improved in the manuscript and on which to base an editorial decision. As with any appeals against rejections, the matter should be brought to the attention of the EICs in the first instance.

Besides novelty and impact, what are you looking for in a full-length article?

A full-length article must demonstrate a sound understanding of research methodology, including ethical considerations, selection and development of methodology, control of influencing factors when considering the intervention under investigation and realistic interpretation of the results reported. Over-statement of results is probably the most common ‘error’ that we observe in full-length articles.

What are your most important tips for production of good figures and tables?

Please do not over-complicate figures and tables. A figure can explain a complex process far better than many words, but it must



be unambiguous and clearly labelled. Tables should not be overly long and should be labelled appropriately and succinctly.

What advice would you give to first-time authors?

My advice for first-time authors is to try to believe you can do it. Most authors have already done the hard work, which is completing their research or finding a way to treat that difficult case. Why not share that with others in a full-length article or case report to add to the body of work in your field? I firmly believe that everyone can write. Get that first draft down on paper and then revise and revise. Enlist the help of a colleague who has previously published, or that of a mentor, if you are lucky enough to have one. Even the most cited author was once a first-time author, remember that!

What should be in supplementary materials? What are the criteria?

Supplementary materials should include anything that is critical for the reader to follow the methodology and results of your study but is superfluous to the actual manuscript. This will vary depending on your study and its methods.

What should we do if we have an idea for writing a review paper? How should we contact the editors about it?

If you are considering a review article and unsure whether it is within the scope of the journal, you should email the journal office at tipsro@elsevier.com. Our journal manager will then contact the relevant EIC regarding your correspondence.

What is your vision for this journal in 5 to 10 years?

Our vision for the journal has always been to serve the radiation oncology community in the best way we can with literature that is meaningful for their clinical practice. This will continue to remain our vision into the future. Regarding the practical aspects of journal management, we are proud that this year tipsRO was accepted for PubMed indexation, which increases our reach and the reach of our authors' work and is testimony to the quality of the work published. Next, we will apply to Scopus and subsequently for an impact factor. We think that tipsRO has a very bright and exciting future ahead.



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