

Report of the Editors – 2020

Co-Editors: Mark Brewer (1 January 2019 – 31 December 2021)
Debashis Ghosh (1 January 2018 – 31 December 2020)
William Rosenberger (1 January 2021 – 31 December 2023)
Alan Welsh (1 January 2020 - 31 December 2022)
Executive Editor: Geert Molenberghs (1 January 2018 – 31 December 2023)

Biometrics is a journal of the International Biometric Society (IBS). The journal is a top scholarly publication reporting work promoting the use of statistical and mathematical theory and methods in the biosciences. *Biometrics* authors are among the most respected authorities in the statistics profession. Information about the journal, including detailed instructions for authors; new developments; and review-time statistics (updated monthly) are available at the journal website, <https://biometrics.biometricsociety.org/>. The newsletter of the IBS, the *Biometric Bulletin*, features a column in each issue reporting on news related to *Biometrics*. The journal is published by Wiley; online content is accessible at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/15410420>.

Editorial Board

Co-Editor Debashis Ghosh completed his three-year term as Co-Editor on 31 December 2020. We thank Debashis for outstanding, dedicated service to the journal. We welcome Debashis' successor, William (Bill) Rosenberger, Professor at the Department of Statistics, George Mason University in Virginia, U.S.A., whose three-year term began on 1 January 2021.

There are currently 96 Associate Editors on the *Biometrics* Editorial Board, with expertise traversing a broad range of methodological and application areas.

In 2020, 12 Associate Editors retired or resigned, and 15 new Associate Editors joined the Board. We thank all of our current and former Associate Editors for their excellent service. We also thank the numerous referees who have volunteered their time and expertise

to our peer review process. The names of all referees serving during 2020 are listed in the December 2020 issue.

Since September 2018, Ms. Chantal Brodie and Ms. Ann Hanhart, in 2020 supported by her daughter Rachel, have jointly been serving *Biometrics* as Editorial Managers.

During 2020, as part of the journal's COVID-19 resilience plan, the three Co-Editors Mark Brewer, Debashis Ghosh, and Alan Welsh, have received support from retired Co-Editors Stijn Vansteelandt (Belgian Region, 2016–2018) and Malka Gorfine (Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2017–2019). In addition to revisions still in their pipelines, they handled 11 new manuscripts. Former Executive Editor Marie Davidian (ENAR) is prepared to support the Executive Editor's office whenever needed over the course of the pandemic.

Submission and Acceptance Statistics

In 2020, *Biometrics* received 710 new submissions to the Biometric Methodology and Biometric Practice sections of the journal. This number of submissions to Methodology and Practice substantially increased relative to the 653, 608, 603, and 617 submissions received in 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2016, respectively. This is noteworthy, against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our profession has shown its best in conducting biometric research, a good portion of which was directly motivated by the pandemic.

Of the total number of 710 submissions in 2020, 536 (75.5%) were to Biometric Methodology, compared to 70.6% in 2019, 69.9% in 2018, 74.0% in 2017, 73.4% in 2016, 66.8% in 2015, and 66.7% in 2014. Thus, the proportion of Biometric Methodology submissions is higher than it has been for several years, even up from the 2016 fraction.

The journal also received one new Reader Reaction (seven in 2019, four in 2018, four in 2017, two in 2016), and one Letter to the Editors (one in 2019, two in 2018, one in each of the years 2017 and 2016).

The 710 new manuscript submissions came from 44 countries/districts. The greatest proportion of submissions was from the U.S.A. (57.9%); followed by the P. R. China (11.6%), Canada (5.2%), and the United Kingdom (3.5%). Authors from each of the following countries contributed in the 1–2% range: Brazil, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Taiwan. Each of the remaining countries/districts contributed less than 1.0% of the total new submissions. Table 1 shows the distribution over 2020 of new manuscript submissions by geographic region.

TABLE 1 HERE.

Table 2 displays the first review status and the current review status (as of January 25, 2021, the date on which this report was prepared) of 2019 and 2020 new manuscript submissions, respectively. In 2020, the Co-Editors rejected about 20.0% of new manuscripts without external review. The overall acceptance rate for 2019 was about 20.5%.

TABLE 2 HERE.

Of the one Reader Reaction submitted in 2020, a revision was invited, while the single Letter to the Editor was rejected after review.

In 2020, *Biometrics* published 72 papers in the Biometric Methodology Section (93 in 2019) and 38 Biometric Practice papers (28 the year before). One of the Methodology papers is of the Discussion paper type, with one discussant. Three of the Practice papers are discussed by 11 discussants all together. Of the 110 articles published in the Methodology or Practice Sections, 65.5% were in Biometric Methodology, compared to 76.9% in 2019, 70.6% in 2018, 69.2% in 2017, 60.4% in 2016, and 62.6% in 2015.

Further, three Reader Reactions, two Letters to the Editor, and a Correction were published.

Review Times

In 2020, *Biometrics* continued its tradition of providing high-quality, timely reviews, which are roughly comparable to those of 2019. This is remarkable, given the pandemic and a 9% increase in number of submissions. Our review times continue to be among the best in the statistics profession, and we are indebted to our Associate Editors and referees for their dedication to swift and constructive reviews. Table 3 shows major percentiles of review times for first submissions and for first revisions for 2019 and 2020, where review time is defined as the time period between the date when a manuscript was received by the journal and the date when a letter and reports were sent to the author(s). Results are presented for all submissions and for manuscripts that were sent out for external review by the Co-Editor, where manuscripts of the latter type exclude those rejected or accepted by the Co-Editors without being sent to an Associate Editor. Each line of the table is derived from Kaplan-Meier estimates of survival curves for time to review, treating manuscripts for which reviews are pending as non-informatively censored.

TABLE 3 HERE.

From the table, the median review time in 2020 for all first submissions was 1.7 months, slightly below what it was in 2019. The 75th and 95th percentiles were 2.7 and 4.3 months, respectively, similar to what it was in 2019.

The median time to first review for all revisions in 2020 was 2.1 months, and the 75th and 95th percentiles were 2.7 and 4.3 months, similar to what it was in 2019, apart from the 95th percentile. No paper experienced a review time of any kind of more than 6.9 months in 2020, slightly higher than in 2019. Kaplan-Meier survival curves based on the 2020 data are presented in Figure 1 and offer a comparison with the 2019 figures.

FIGURE 1 HERE.

Backlog and EarlyView

Backlog is defined as the time between acceptance and appearance of an article in the *print* version of the journal. The *Biometrics* backlog remained steady at six to eight months over 2014–2015; however, at the end of 2015, the backlog began to increase, and in 2016 reached nine to twelve months. It stabilized and slightly decreased in 2017, with backlog ranging between nine and eleven months. It then decreased further in 2018, with backlog ranging between six and ten months. For 2019, the backlog was of the same magnitude, i.e., between six and nine months. In 2020, a slight increase is observed, with backlog ranging between seven and ten months.

The December 2020 issue contains papers accepted in January and February 2020.

The EarlyView feature provided by our publisher ensures that accepted papers are published electronically in their final, typeset form within eight weeks of being sent to the publisher (provided authors return proofs within 48 hours) at the *Biometrics* website at Wiley Online Library (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/15410420>) and are assigned a digital object identifier (DOI) so that they can be cited formally. Information on how to cite EarlyView articles using the DOI number can be found at the journal website (<https://biometrics.biometricsociety.org/>) under the Information for Authors link.

***Biometrics* Sessions and Meetings at Leading Statistical Conferences**

Two *Biometrics* Editorial Board meetings were planned during major scientific gatherings: at the International Biometric Conference 2020 (IBC2020) in July, Seoul, South Korea, and at the Joint Statistical Meetings 2020 (JSM2020), 1–6 August, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, both meetings were canceled in their face-

to-face form and replaced by virtual meetings. JSM2020 took place during the originally scheduled conference time frame, whereas IBC2020 was repacked as a set of virtual meetings (vIBC2020), held throughout July and August 2020, in an effort to accommodate as many time zones as possible.

The Editorial Board meetings were redesigned as two virtual sessions, on July 15 and 31, with a record attendance of about 60 Associate Editors. It is likely that the 2021 Editorial Board meetings will be virtual. In future years, we may opt for hybrid forms.

In keeping with tradition, two winners were chosen for the Best Paper Published in Biometrics by an IBS Member Awards for 2018 and 2019:

John D. Rice, Robert L. Strawderman, and Brent A. Johnson (2018). Regularity of a renewal process estimated from binary data. *Biometrics* **74**, 566–574.

Andrew G. Chapple and Peter F. Thall (2019). A hybrid Phase I-II/III clinical trial design allowing dose re-optimization in Phase III. *Biometrics* **85**, 371–381.

The paper by Rice *et al.* was showcased on August 11, while a session devoted to the Chapple *et al.* paper was held on July 8. The winners of these awards were recognized at the Awards Ceremony held at the closure of the vIBC2020.

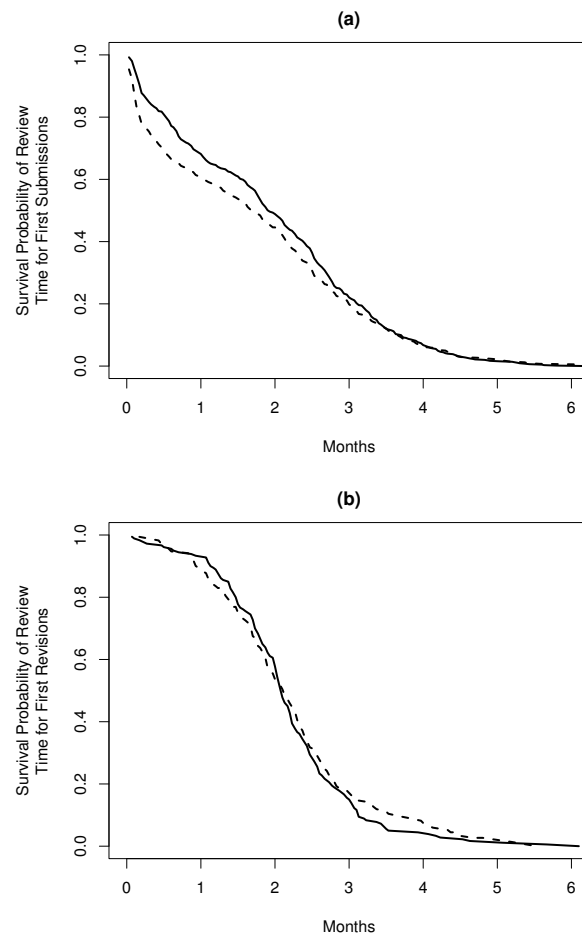


Figure 1. Kaplan-Meier survival curve estimates of the review times in months for (a) first submissions and (b) first revisions. 2019: solid line; 2020: dashed line.

Table 1*Distribution of 2020 New Manuscript Submissions ($n = 710$) by Geographical Region*

Region	Frequency	Percent
Africa	3	0.42
Asia	139	19.58
Europe	98	13.80
Latin America and the Caribbean	11	1.55
North America	448	63.10
Oceania	11	1.55

Table 2*Review Status of New Submissions in 2019 and 2020*

Year	Status	First Review		Current*	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
2019 ($n = 653$)	Rejected w/o External Reviews	95	14.6	95	14.6
	Rejected w/ External Reviews	389	59.6	397	60.8
	Revision Allowed at Own Risk	95	14.6	5	0.8
	Revision Invited	72	11.0	14	2.1
	Accepted	1	0.2	134	20.5
	First Submission Under Review	1	0.2	1	0.2
	Revision Under Review	–	–	7	1.7
2020 ($n = 710$)	Rejected w/o External Reviews	142	20.0	142	20.0
	Rejected w/ External Reviews	348	49.0	357	50.3
	Revision Allowed at Own Risk	68	9.6	32	4.5
	Revision Invited	77	10.9	56	7.9
	Accepted	0	0.0	31	4.4
	First Submission Under Review	75	10.6	75	10.6
	Revision Under Review	–	–	17	2.4

*as of January 3, 2020, the date on which this report was prepared.

Table 3*Summary Statistics for Manuscript Review Times in 2019 and 2020*

Year	Submission Type	MS Type	<i>n</i>	Percentiles of Review Time in Months					
				Min	25th	50th	75th	95th	Max
2019	First Submission	All	653	0.0	0.7	1.9	2.9	4.2	6.2
		Reviewed Externally	557	0.0	1.3	2.3	3.1	4.3	6.2
	First Revision	All	180	0.0	1.7	2.1	2.6	3.5	6.1
		Reviewed Externally	148	0.0	1.7	2.2	2.7	4.1	6.1
2020	First Submission	All	710	0.0	0.3	1.7	2.7	4.3	6.9
		Reviewed Externally	568	0.0	1.0	2.2	3.0	4.4	6.9
	First Revision	All	171	0.0	1.5	2.1	2.7	4.3	5.5
		Reviewed Externally	141	0.0	1.6	2.2	2.7	4.4	5.5