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Editor-in-Chief articles of choice and comments at the year-end of 2023

Tarnawski AS *et al.* Hot articles and deficiencies in 2023

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Abstract

As the Editor-in-Chief, every week prior to a new issue's online publication, I perform a careful review of all encompassed articles, including the title, clinical and/or research importance, originality, novelty, and ratings by the peer reviewers. Based on this review, I select the papers of choice and suggest pertinent changes (*e.g.*, in the title) to the Company Editors responsible for publication. This process, while time-consuming, is very important for assuring the quality of publications and highlighting important articles that Readers may revisit.

Key Words: Papers of choice; Careful weekly review; Suggested changes/revisions; Hepatocellular carcinoma; Pancreatic cancer; Liver cirrhosis; Liver injury; Gastric cancer; Colorectal cancer; Inflammatory bowel diseases

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INTRODUCTION

As the Editor-in-Chief, every week prior to a new issue's online publication, I perform a careful review of all encompassed articles, including the title, clinical and/or research importance, originality, novelty, and ratings by the peer reviewers. Based on this review, I select my papers of choice, suggest changes (*e.g.*, in the title), and share my

comments with the Company Editors responsible for publication. While time-consuming, this process is essential for assuring the quality of publications and highlighting important articles that Readers may revisit.

Samples of my assessments during the process are provided below.

HOT ARTICLES AND INSUFFICIENT ARTICLES

Gastroenterology and Hepatology

WJGv29i1: I found the paper "Current status and future perspectives of radiomics in hepatocellular carcinoma" to be very well-conceived and executed^[1].

For the paper "Microbiota of the gastrointestinal tract: Friend or foe?", although it generated mixed evaluations by the reviewers, in my opinion it is reasonable overall^[2].

For the paper "*In vivo* recognition of bioactive substances of *Polygonum multiflorum* for protecting mitochondria against metabolic dysfunction-associated fatty liver disease", the title is not precise. Possibly, it would be better to replace "...for regulating mitochondria..." with "...for protecting mitochondria..." since you cannot regulate against something^[3].

WJGv29i2: The articles in this issue are particularly interesting. Among them, the following three papers stand out: (1) Small intestine topic: "Current opinion on the regulation of small intestinal magnesium absorption"^[4]; (2) Pancreatic cancer topic: "Irreversible electroporation for the management of pancreatic cancer: Current data and future directions"^[5]; and (3) Liver cirrhosis topic (Letter to the Editor): "Celiac disease screening in patients with cryptogenic cirrhosis"^[6]. For the third, the reviewers (IDs: 05261106 and 06195974) did an exemplary job in assisting the authors to improve and enhance the article^[6].

This issue also includes an additional three articles related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the liver: (1) Liver injury topic: "Liver injury in COVID-19: Clinical features, potential mechanisms, risk factors and clinical treatments"^[7]; (2) Liver injury topic: "COVID-19 and liver injury: An ongoing challenge"^[8]; and (3)

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease topic: "Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and COVID-19: Harmless companions or disease intensifier?"^[9]. It would be very beneficial to the readership audience if these papers were accompanied by a short comment made by 1 or 2 Associate Editor(s) who are versed in liver.

WJGv29i3: Collectively, the articles are interesting. I like paper "COVID-19 and hepatic injury: Diversity and risk assessment" because it provides in-depth insight into the cellular and molecular mechanisms of several liver cell types. To better highlight the study's precise topic, I suggest changing the title to: "COVID-19 and hepatic injury: Cellular and molecular mechanisms in diverse liver cells"^[10].

WJGv29i4: For this issue, I like the following papers: (1) Chronic liver disease: "Iron as a therapeutic target in chronic liver disease"^[11]. However, the number of references is excessive; and (2) Ulcerative colitis: "Gaseous metabolites as therapeutic targets in ulcerative colitis"^[12].

Unfortunately, for both articles, different rating forms appeared, and they were not filled in by the reviewers (please see below). Also, different rating forms appeared in the Case Report "Diagnostic and economic value of carcinoembryonic antigen, carbohydrate antigen 19-9 and carbohydrate antigen 72-4 in gastrointestinal cancer". The rating agency can potentially perceive these different evaluation forms as problems.

WJGv29i5: For this issue, I would like to highlight the following three papers: (1) Chronic liver diseases topic: "Bone loss in chronic liver diseases: Could healthy liver be a requirement for good bone health?"^[13], because it is an important but overlooked problem; (2) Crohn's disease topic: "*Saccharomyces cerevisiae* prevents postoperative recurrence of Crohn's disease modeled by ileocecal resection in HLA-B27 transgenic rats"^[14]. I suggest changing title to: "*Saccharomyces cerevisiae* prevents postoperative recurrence of Crohn's disease in HLA-B27 transgenic rat model"; and (3) Liver transplantation topic: "Human leukocyte antigen antibodies and leukocyte

antigen/killer-cell immunoglobulin-like receptor genes are important in transplant immunology in the liver". I suggest simplifying the title to: "Importance of human leukocyte antigen antibodies and leukocyte antigen/killer-cell immunoglobulin-like receptor genes in liver transplantation"^[15].

WJGv29i6: I like the following three review articles: (1) Gastric cancer topic: "Contributions of the receptor for advanced glycation end products axis activation in gastric cancer^[16]", because it is novel and has potential for practically impacting translational research; (2) Rectal cancer topic: "Implications of recent neoadjuvant clinical trials on the future practice of radiotherapy in locally advanced rectal cancer"^[17]; and (3) Hepatocellular carcinoma topic: "Immunotherapy for hepatocellular carcinoma: Current status and future perspectives"^[18].

WJGv29i7: Overall, the articles are interesting but I especially like: (1) Colorectal cancer topic: "Influence of methyl donor nutrients as epigenetic regulators in colorectal cancer: A systematic review of observational studies"^[19]. However, there is a clear disconnect between reviewer 00068967's rating of scientific quality as excellent and his/her specific comments; (2) Chronic pancreatitis topic: "Advances in acute and chronic pancreatitis"^[20]; and (3) Inflammatory bowel disease topic: "Mucosal healing and inflammatory bowel disease: Therapeutic implications and new targets"^[21]. However, in this paper, the quality of mucosal healing was not elaborated on and this may impact readers' interest after identifying the paper with its current title through database searches.

I would also like to highlight: "Are we ready for telemonitoring inflammatory bowel disease? A review of advances, enablers, and barriers"^[22]. Modifying the title to "Are we ready to use telemedicine for monitoring of inflammatory bowel disease? A review of advances, enablers, and barriers".

WJGv29i8: The articles in this issue are well-selected, well-peer-reviewed, and interesting. I especially like the papers: (1) Colorectal cancer topic: “Early-onset colorectal cancer: A review of current knowledge”^[23]; (2) Acute liver failure topic: “Stress granules inhibit endoplasmic reticulum stress-mediated apoptosis during hypoxia-induced injury in acute liver failure”^[24]. It would be good if one of the Associate Editors who is versed in liver or basic science would write a comment on this paper in one of the future *WJG* issues; and (3) Hepatocellular carcinoma topic: “Predictors of early and late hepatocellular carcinoma recurrence”^[25], as Reviewers #06350183^[23] and #06332646^[25] performed careful peer reviews.

WJGv29i10: Overall, the articles are reasonable, well-selected, and interesting. I like the papers: (1) Gastric juice topic: “Intraprocedural gastric juice analysis as compared to rapid urease test for real-time detection of *Helicobacter pylori*”^[26]; and (2) Inflammatory bowel disease topic: “Precision medicine in inflammatory bowel disease: Individualizing the use of biologics and small molecule therapies”^[27].

WJGv29i11: In the paper originally titled “Modulation of gut microbiota as a potential therapy to manipulate drug-induced hepatic damage in COVID-19 patients”, the authors wrote that in response to a Reviewer's comment they changed the title to “Gut microbiome therapeutic modulation to alleviate drug-induced hepatic damage in COVID-19 patients”^[28]. However, in the current version (3/21/22) of *WJG* online, the title has not been changed.

Reviewers #05213310^[28], #06099089^[28], and #06404127^[29] performed very substantive and complete peer reviews.

WJGv29i12: The articles are interesting and well-selected. I especially like the paper titled “Autoimmune liver diseases and SARS-CoV-2”^[30]. Both reviewers of this paper (IDs: 01560784 and 00722786) performed excellent peer reviews.

WJGv29i13: The articles are well-selected and interesting, overall. I especially like the following two papers: (1) Nonalcoholic fatty liver topic: “Research progress on the mitochondrial mechanism of age-related non-alcoholic fatty liver”^[31]; and (2) Intestinal symptoms topic: “Interferon-lambda: New functions on intestinal symptoms in COVID-19”. For the latter, I suggest changing the title to “Interferon-lambda: New role in intestinal symptoms of COVID-19”^[32]. In general, it may be of benefit if we should all pay more attention to the articles' titles.

WJGv29i14: I especially like the following three papers: (1) Liver cancer topic: “Anti-inflammatory effect and antihepatoma mechanism of carrimycin”^[33]; (2) Gastric mucosa topic: “Effectiveness of *Helicobacter pylori* eradication in the treatment of early-stage gastric mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue lymphoma: An up-to-date meta-analysis”^[34]; and (3) Inflammatory bowel disease topic: “Role of prebiotics, probiotics, and synbiotics in management of inflammatory bowel disease: Current perspectives”^[35]. Reviewer #03547306 rated the article as “good” but his message to the authors was simply “very nice”. This is very simplistic and does not constitute a good review comment.

I'd also like to highlight that the paper titled “Insight into the liver dysfunction in COVID-19 patients: Molecular mechanisms and possible therapeutic strategies”^[36] was rated by Reviewer #06215370 as Grade E = do not publish, while the other rating was “good”.

WJGv29i15: The articles are interesting overall. For “Editor's choice” papers, I especially like two: (1) Pancreatic cancer topic: “Emerging role of non-invasive and liquid biopsy biomarkers in pancreatic cancer”^[37], because of the importance of the topic; and (2) Gastrointestinal barrier dysfunction topic: “Mechanisms of gastrointestinal barrier dysfunction in COVID-19 patients”^[38].

WJGv29i17: The articles are overall interesting. Two standouts among them are: (1) Gastric cancer topic: “Novel biomarkers for early detection of gastric cancer”^[39]; and (2)

Liver steatosis topic: “Non-invasive evaluation of liver steatosis with imaging modalities: New techniques and applications”^[40]. Reviewers #06458345 and #064686657 performed very good peer reviews^[39].

WJGv29i19: The articles are overall interesting. I like the papers: (1) Liver cirrhosis topic: “Branched chain amino acids in hepatic encephalopathy and sarcopenia in liver cirrhosis: Evidence and uncertainties”^[41]; and (2) Gastrointestinal stromal tumor topic: “TATA-box-binding protein-associated factor 15 is a novel biomarker that promotes cell proliferation and migration in gastrointestinal stromal tumor”^[42]. The peer reviewers for these two papers performed a very good job.

I'd like to highlight that in the paper titled “Susceptibility patterns and virulence genotypes of *Helicobacter pylori* affecting eradication therapy outcomes among Egyptian patients with gastroduodenal diseases”^[43] (Gastroduodenal diseases topic), both old and new review forms were used.

WJGv29i21: The articles in this issue are well-selected and overall interesting. I especially like the following two papers: (1) Crohn's disease topic: “Crohn's disease: Why the ileum?”^[44]; and (2) “How to select a journal for your research”^[45]. However, if I had been the Reviewer of the latter, I would have asked the authors to expand this paper further.

WJGv29i23: The articles are overall interesting and novel. After checking and reviewing all of them, one paper stands out: “18 β -glycyrrhetic acid inhibits proliferation of gastric cancer cells through regulating the miR-345-5p/TGM2 signaling pathways”^[46]. The reviewers performed overall good peer reviews.

WJGv29i25: I have reviewed all the articles and found them interesting overall. I especially like the paper titled “Impact of gut microbiome in the development and

treatment of pancreatic cancer: Newer insights”^[47]. The Reviews are mostly reasonable, and so is the timeline of publication.

WJGv29i28: Some of the articles are interesting. I especially like the paper titled “Microbiota revolution: How gut microbes regulate our lives”^[48]. However, in the Abstract I suggest changing the term “psychic disorder” to “neurological disorders”. The reviewers performed reasonable peer reviews, but some need to be longer and more complex.

WJGv29i29: The articles are interesting overall. I especially like the paper titled “MiR-204-3p overexpression inhibits gastric carcinoma cell proliferation by inhibiting the MAPK pathway and RIP1/MLK1 necroptosis pathway to promote apoptosis”^[49]. The reviewers performed overall good peer reviews.

WJGv29i31: Some articles are interesting, on average. The most interesting from among this group is “Gastric cancer incidence based on endoscopic Kyoto classification of gastritis”^[50]. The reviewers performed overall reasonable peer reviews, but some are simplistic.

WJGv29i35: Some articles are interesting and important. I especially like the paper titled “Regenerating gene 4 promotes chemoresistance of colorectal cancer by affecting lipid droplet synthesis and assembly”^[51], which is very interesting.

The reviewers performed overall reasonable peer reviews, but some are simplistic.

WJGv29i37: Some of the articles in this issue are interesting and important. I especially like the following three papers: (1) Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease topic: “Global trends and hotspots of treatment for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease: A bibliometric and visualization analysis (2010-2023)”^[52]. Possibly, the authors should update this article since in June 2023 the AASLD changed the nomenclature; namely, nonalcoholic fatty

liver disease (NAFLD) will now be metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD). The MASLD nomenclature encompasses patients who have hepatic steatosis and have at least one of five cardiometabolic risk factors. They can also update their paper and mention the SAMARA Study (short for “Semaglutide treatment in the real-world for fibrosis due to NAFLD in obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus”); this is the clinical trial that will examine if a United States’ Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medication called semaglutide, which is commonly used for the treatment of type 2 diabetes and obesity, could be a promising treatment option for patients with liver scarring caused by NAFLD. Semaglutide belongs to a class of medications known as glucagon-like, peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RA) that mimics the GLP-1 hormone released in the body's gut in response to eating; (2) Primary biliary cholangitis topic: “Sequence of events leading to primary biliary cholangitis”^[53]. While a few reviewers did not rate this paper highly, I felt it is interesting; and (3) “New insights into the pathogenesis of primary biliary cholangitis asymptomatic stage”^[54].

WJGv29i38: Some of the articles are interesting. I especially like the paper titled “Scoping review on health-related physical fitness in patients with inflammatory bowel disease: Assessment, interventions, and future directions”^[55]. It is a very important paper in its exploration of new directions in inflammatory bowel disease (commonly known as IBD). However, I feel that the authors should explain more regarding the “scoping review” aspect cited in the Abstract and Introduction sections, since that term is not commonly known and the reference to a few such papers is not sufficient for the readers’ understanding. If there is time, the authors should clearly provide a brief definition of “scoping review” in the Abstract and in the Introduction. This will definitely enhance the paper, which otherwise is excellent.

Reviewer #03372482 did an excellent peer review^[55].

WJGv29i39: Some articles are interesting and important. I especially like the two papers: (1) Hepatocellular carcinoma topic: “Function and biomedical implications of

exosomal microRNAs delivered by parenchymal and nonparenchymal cells in hepatocellular carcinoma”^[56]. Reviewer #00028182 performed an excellent job. Perhaps we could invite this Reviewer to write a separate review article (*e.g.*, reviewing the Review and focusing on the role exosomal microRNAs in gut physiology and pathology, or provide his comments in a Letter to the Editor); and (2) Inflammatory bowel disease topic: “Risk assessment of venous thromboembolism in inflammatory bowel disease by inherited risk in a population-based incident cohort”^[57]. Similar to my above comment, please consider inviting Reviewer #05205091 to write a Letter to the Editor or a Review article on this topic. Usually, the readers very rarely read the reviewers' comments that accompany a publication.

WJGv29i41: This issue contains six articles in total, including two related to the liver. Some of the articles are interesting. I especially like the following two papers: (1) “Diet as an epigenetic factor in inflammatory bowel disease”^[58]. Although the paper is not the strongest, its topic is important; and (2) “Inflammatory bowel diseases patients suffer from significant low levels and barriers to physical activity: The “BE-FIT-IBD” study”^[59].

WJGv29i43: This issue contains six articles in total, including one related to the liver. Some of the articles are interesting overall. I especially like the paper titled “Endoscopic submucosal dissection for early gastric cancer: It is time to consider the quality of its outcomes”^[60]. While some of the reviewers did not rate this article highly, in my opinion it pertains to an important topic and will attract readers’ attention.

WJGv29i45: This issue contains six articles total, including two related to the liver. Some of the articles are interesting overall. I like the paper titled “Gut microbiota in women: The secret of psychological and physical well-being”^[61]. While some reviewers did not rate this article highly, in my opinion it addresses an important topic and will attract readers’ attention.

Regarding the Letter to the Editor article titled “Intestinal barrier in inflammatory bowel disease: A bibliometric analysis”^[62], it triggered controversies between reviewers. One of the reviewers rated it “Grade E-Do not publish”, “Grade D-No novelty” and “Grade D-No creativity or innovation” and cited possible signs of plagiarism, *etc.* The second Reviewer rated it Grades B, and the third Reviewer rated it Grade A-Excellent.

WJGv29i46: This issue contains seven articles in total, including four related to the liver. Some of the articles are interesting. I especially like the following two papers: (1) “Emerging space for non-polyethylene-glycol bowel preparations in inflammatory bowel disease-related colonoscopy: Veering toward better adherence and palatability”^[63]. This is an interesting and clinically important topic that outweighs some concerns raised by the Reviewer; and (2) “Frailty in end-stage liver disease: Understanding pathophysiology, tools for assessment, and strategies for management”^[64].

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the year 2023, as the Editor-in-Chief of *WJG*, I wish to share with Readers the evolution of my process of carefully reviewing all published articles, including my considerations of the title, clinical and/or research importance, originality, novelty, and rating by the peer reviewers. I perform this service every week prior a new issue’s online publication. Based on this review process, I indicate my papers of choice and suggest changes to enhance them (*e.g.*, in the titles), sharing the comments with the Company Editors responsible for publication. This time- and effort-intensive process is my honor to conduct in order to ensure the quality of publications and highlight important articles that could spur Readers to revisit an issue or delve deeper into papers that could benefit their own research or clinical activities or provide new knowledge in a seemingly unrelated topic that didn’t first catch their attention.

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