

The Journal of Search and Rescue (JSAR) is an open access peer-reviewed electronic journal for the collation and distribution of original scholarly material on search and rescue (SAR).

It is being supported by the in-kind work and contributions of the Editorial Board. There is still the need for a dedicated journal serving those with a direct interest in all disciplines of search and rescue including: rope rescue, water (flat, swift and marine), ice rescue, wilderness search and rescue, structural collapse rescue, trench collapse rescue, cave rescue, dive rescue, motor vehicle extrication, canine search, technical animal rescue, air rescue, search theory, search management, and mines rescue. JSAR exists to fulfil that need.

Article submissions from these and other SAR disciplines are welcome. Launching this journal on the internet offers a relatively cost-effective means of sharing this invaluable content. It affords the prompt publication of articles and the dissemination of information to those with an interest in SAR.

JSAR will provide a forum for the publication of original research, reviews and commentaries which will consolidate and expand the theoretical and professional basis of the area. The Journal is interested in theoretical, strategic, tactical, operational and technical matters.

Advertising within JSAR will be considered in the future to ensure sustainable funding is available to enhance and continue the work of the journal. The publication of an article in the Journal of Search and Rescue does not necessarily imply that JSAR or its Editorial Board accepts or endorses the views or opinions expressed in it.

Editors: Dr Elizabeth Cuevas, Dr Ian Greatbatch, Dr Scott Hammond & Dr Robert Koester

Editorial Team: Ian Allen, Robert Rovetto, Chris Thompson, Ben Weedon

Additional Materials Editor: Andy MacAuley

With thanks to: Ms K Moon, MSc

Cover Image: Firefighters in London train whilst socially distancing, April 2020

Editorial Board

Keith Gillespie ADFSc EMT-P
Steve Glassey MEmergMgt PGCPM
GCTSS FEPS CEM®
Daniel Graham LLB (Hons)
Kay Goss MA CEM®

Andrea Kleinsmith, BS, MSc, PhD
Ian Manock MEmergMgt
Mike Rose MA MEPS
Brett C. Stofel BS J

Contents

	Page
Editorial <i>Greatbatch, I</i>	ii
Letter: Operation Braidwood <i>O'Neill, D</i>	166
The Paradigm Shift in Search and Rescue Response During the COVID-19 Pandemic in California <i>Young, C</i>	173
Comparing the impact of COVID-19 on Search and Rescue and Fire emergency incident responses <i>Koester, R & Greatbatch I</i>	190
Decontamination of Technical Rope Rescue Equipment in the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus pandemic <i>Greatbatch, I Allen I & Williams, DG</i>	200
Review of Search and Rescue Response Guidelines to COVID-19. <i>Koester, R</i>	213

Editorial

Welcome to Volume 4, Issue 2: A special COVID-19 issue. Firstly, let me apologise for its lateness. Our intention was to publish very quickly, forgoing the usual peer-review process, in April, following the model established by medical journals such as *The Lancet*, and *New England Journal of Medicine* (Rubin et al., 2020). However, a couple of things occurred that meant that that didn't happen; firstly, we received fewer articles than we anticipated, and with hindsight that makes sense – our normal contributors were the people responding to the crisis, and so had limited time on their hands for writing! Secondly, we had a couple of papers that after being sent for initial editorial review, were considered good enough to publish, but very likely to be improved by submitting to the full review process. We then took the decision to review almost all the papers. Where they have not been, they will be marked at the title page to show that.

As I mention above, many of our readers and contributors are very much involved in the response to the pandemic, and in many ways the SAR world continues as normal – we still hear reports of heroism, selflessness, creative adaption to new circumstances and a global commitment to improvement development and functioning so that others may live. Of course, we also hear many of the same less positive reports; the enduring issues around governance, legality, ethics and safety and this month specifically, the misuse of drones.

But that brings me on to the main thrust of this editorial. There are many calls for us to build a better world, as we come out of the pandemic – for environmental protections to be improved globally, for the threat of climate change to be taken seriously and of course for the shameful inequalities and prejudices faced by some of us to end. In short, there are many calls to see this pandemic as an opportunity to heal our societies and our planet, to turn away from violence, prejudice and racism and to end our destruction of the environment.

As scientists, and as those working in the humanitarian sector, I would say we are unlikely to find much to argue with in those global statements – who wouldn't want to live in a more peaceful, fairer and healthier world?

However, that global sentiment can apply with equal resonance to our world. Few of us have been entirely unchanged during the pandemic – emergency calls may or may not have dropped (it probably depends on where you are) but they will very likely have changed in some way. We have seen training via video, socially distanced searches and rescues and rapid changes in policy in response to a complex, unseen and enigmatic disease.

“The new normal” to borrow a phrase from emergency planning, will look different for SAR teams, as it will for everyone else. In the papers in this special issue, we see calls for action in almost every submission – for more research, for changes to the way we work, for recognition of the challenges we face in the work we do. So why not change our SAR world for the better?

Of course, any change does not need to be drastic, limiting or counter-productive. Why not use this new normal, and the enforced break from normality to reconsider our status quo, with small positive steps. This may be in the form of a statement about equality, or re-examining our recruitment. Are we as representative as we could be, or should be? It may be in the form of an environmental assurance, changing the use of fossil fuels or plastics in our work. It may be in the form of a move towards better governance, turning away from the corruption and self-service that still exists in pockets.

The COVID-19 pandemic is almost certainly not over, despite restrictions in some countries loosening. Inevitably, this means more people will die, or have their lives changed severely in the short or long term. There is a strong possibility that someone reading this will know someone who has contracted the disease, and, devastatingly, some of us will have lost loved ones. COVID-19 has had a deadly toll on all of our populations, let's not waste what positives we may be able to take from the changes it brings.

Dr Ian Greatbatch, FHEA, FRGS, MEPS, FICPEM

London, UK

References

Rubin, E. J., Baden, L. R., Morrissey, S., & Champion, E. W. (2020). Medical Journals and the 2019-nCoV Outbreak. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 382(9), 866–866.
<https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMe2001329>