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The end of an unforgettable year

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Editorial

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This year has been dominated by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic. Without doubt it has resulted in significant disruption to our lives, existing practices and our specialty. Alongside this, there has been a surge in journal submissions for coronavirus-themed articles. It is through medical journals such as ours that published, peer-reviewed evidence can be rapidly shared on a global scale, which is so important in a pandemic such as this. Throughout this year, coronavirus-related articles have been fast-tracked within our peer review process, and we thank everyone involved at *The Journal of Laryngology & Otology* for making this possible.

Otolaryngology as a specialty has been particularly hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic given the close-up nature of our specialty to virion-loaded mucosal surfaces in the upper airways. Virtual (remote) clinics and videoconferencing have taken an increasing precedence since the pandemic was declared, and this theme is continued within this issue.[1–4] In addition, special precautions, use of personal protective equipment and novel techniques have been developed for aerosol-generating procedures in otolaryngology. Lawrence *et al.*, in this month's issue, continue this theme by illustrating a novel drape 'tent' method for use in mastoid surgery.[5]

We have published a substantial number of articles this year linking Covid-19 infection with smell and taste disturbances.[6–10] We end the year with a *tour-de-force* article in this month's issue investigating the olfactory epithelium at the microscopic level in Covid-19 anosmia cases, in an attempt to elucidate the pathogenesis of olfactory dysfunction in Covid-19 infection.[11] Histological findings demonstrate significant disruption and desquamation of the surface olfactory epithelium. The authors hypothesise that failure of epithelial repair leads to thinning and loss of the olfactory dendrites.

The Journal of Laryngology & Otology Senior Editors would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this year's journal in this especially challenging year for all of us, including all the authors, Assistant Editors, reviewers, advisers, production staff, our publishing partners at Cambridge University Press and all other colleagues at *The Journal.*

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