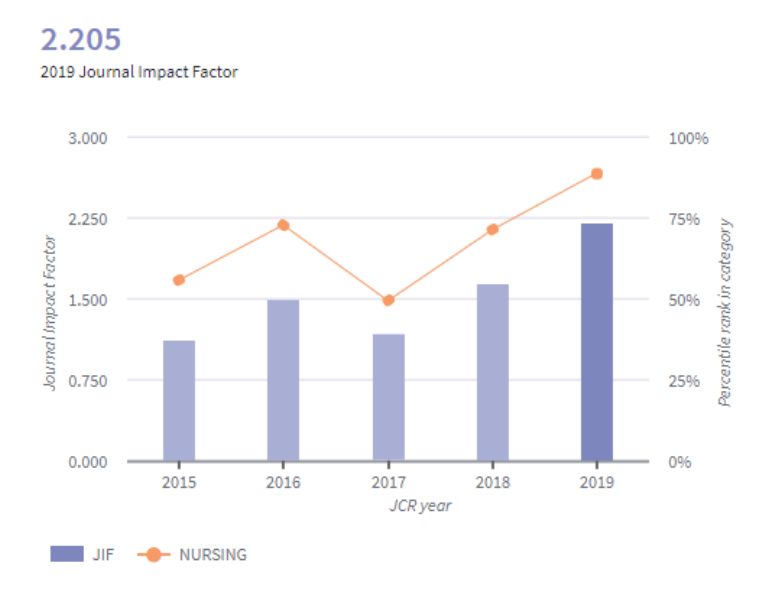


***Nursing in  
Critical Care***  
**Editors' Report**  
**2020**

## Key headlines

NICC's impact factor (IF) has increased significantly from 1.639 for 2018 to 2.205 for 2019. ISI Journal Citation Reports © Ranking rose from 35/120 (Nursing) for 2018 to 14/123 (Nursing) for 2019 and from 33/118 for 2018 to 14/121 (Nursing (Social Science)) for 2019. We are now ranked second out of the four major critical care nursing journals and our submission rate has increased by 26% in 2020 (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Impact Factor trend for Nursing in Critical Care in the last five years

This outcome reflects that the papers appearing within the journal exhibit excellence, relevance and originality to the wider international critical care community. The accomplishments of the journal are without doubt reflective of the exceptional commitment, dedication, energy and good-will of our reviewers and editorial advisory board (EAB) members. Indeed, their constructive and critical feedback to authors and advice to the editorial team throughout the reviewing process and in shaping policy and vision have helped to make *Nursing in Critical Care* a well-informed, innovative, rigorous and relevant source of information for our readers worldwide.

Towards the end of 2019, Josef Trapani and Lyvonne Tume were appointed co-editors after a call for applications and selection interviews. Following a handover period, they formally took

over in January 2020. We are indebted of thanks to the former editors Dr John Albarran and Dr Julie Scholes who stepped down in December 2019. John took up the role in 1997 and Julie joined from the reviewing panel and advisory board and became co-editor in 2004. Dr Wendy Walker is now a permanent input into the journal as associate editor.

At the end of 2019, we created a journal Twitter account @NiCCJournal and by the time of writing this report had more than 1,130 followers across the world.

After a competitive call for expressions of interest, we appointed two new editorial interns in September 2020: Ms Sarah Vollam and Dr Nikolaos (Nikos) Efstathiou. They are working with Dr Wendy Walker (Associate editor) and Dr Josef Trapani and Dr Lyvonne Tume (Editors). This will greatly assist in managing the increasing number of manuscript submissions to the journal, to avoid prolonging our timelines.

In 2020, the WHO Year of the Nurse and Midwife, with the assistance of our publishing manager at Wiley, Lydia Charles, we created a virtual 'free to access' edition of a selected number of papers from the last 24 months to showcase the breadth and depth of critical care nursing expertise. This was accompanied by a guest editorial by Lyvonne Tume, Josef Trapani and Wendy Walker.

We are looking to develop the journal further to really represent critical care across the lifespan: from pre-term neonates to children to adults. We have, therefore, appointed two new paediatric and one neonatal member of the EAB and three more neonatal intensive care reviewers.

We have set up a 'free format' submission style allowing any accepted referencing system at submission stage and giving submitting authors the option to present tables and figures in the same or a different document from the main text. We have also increased the maximum number of tables/figures in each paper from 2 to 4. We are grateful to our former associate managing editors, Dr Sarah Bremner and Dr Caitlin Brown for their help in adopting these changes intended to encourage and facilitate submissions.

Finally, we have promoted the submission of a new paper type that is formally outlined in the author guidelines, that of a critical commentary, which has been hugely popular in 2020.

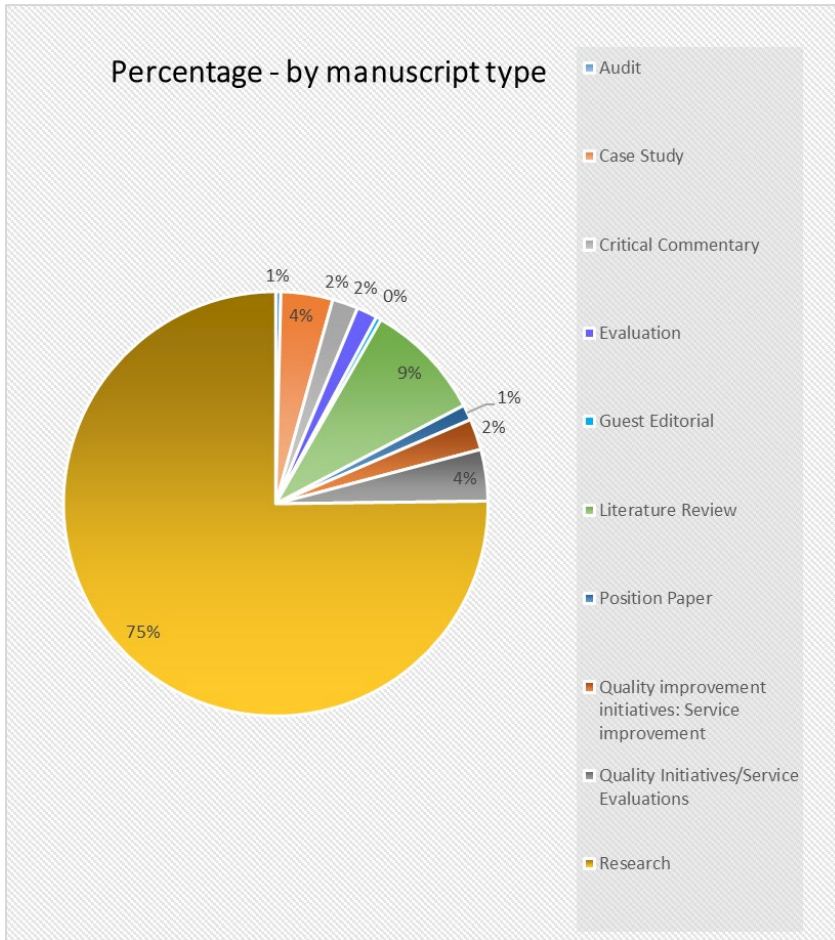
## **Main report**

### **Journal metrics for 2020**

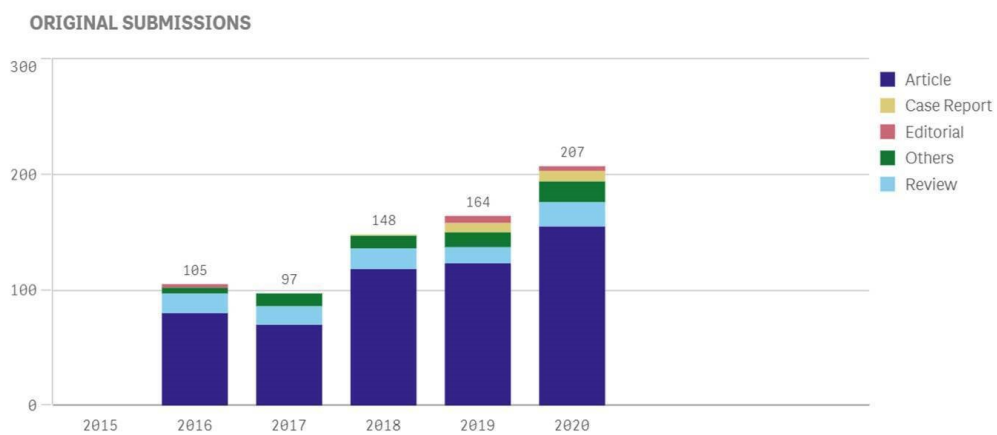
Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the 4<sup>th</sup> November, we received 254 submissions (up from 164 during the whole of 2019). The average submissions per month was 23 (up from an average of 14 last year), ranging from 11 in April to 35 in July and in October. The acceptance rate of manuscripts in 2020 (Jan- September) is around 20-21%, slightly reduced from 31% in 2018-2019. Overall, the percent reject increased from 25.8% in 2019 to 34% in 2020, similarly, there has been an increase in immediate rejects (now 10%) at editorial level. These changes probably reflects the broader range in quality accompanying the increase in submissions following the improved impact factor. Poor quality science and poor English are the primary reasons for rejection. In the last few years, there has been a considerable rise in papers from China, Iran and Turkey where the quality of science, academic rigour and application of content to critical care nursing is variable.

### **Submissions by manuscript type and country**

Manuscript by category accepted for publication was as follows: 75% research, 9% reviews, 4% case studies, 4% service evaluation/quality improvement and 4% critical commentaries (Figure 2). This pattern has remained fairly constant over the last five years (Figure 3). In 2020, the top submitting countries were: the UK, Turkey, China and Iran (Figure 4). Of note, we received more UK papers than previous years.



**Figure 2:** Submissions by type of manuscript between 1 January and 14 November 2020



**Figure 3:** Submission types per year in the last five years

## MANUSCRIPTS RECEIVED - BY COUNTRY/REGION

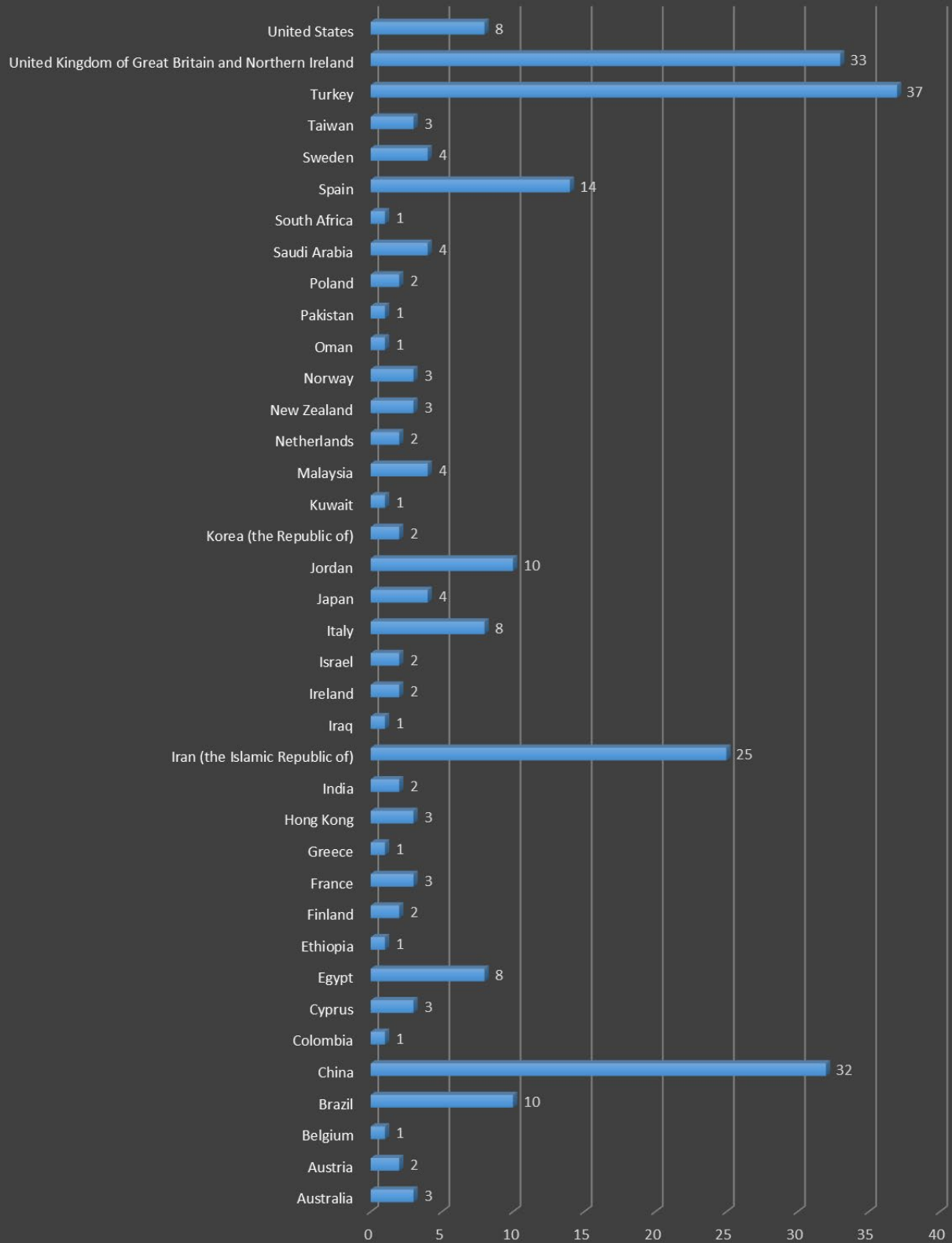
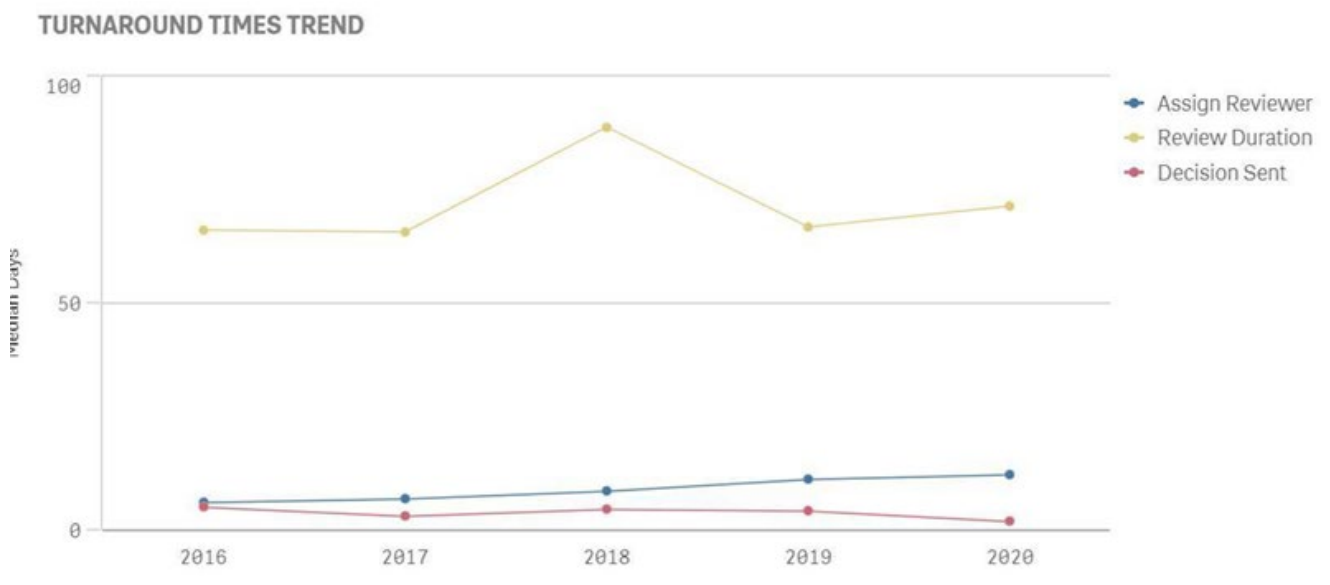


Figure 4: Manuscript submission by country

## Manuscript management and timelines

In 2020, the average time from submission to first decision was 34 days, with average time from manuscript acceptance to online early view a few days. Overall, the average time from manuscript submission to acceptance is 160 days (comparable to the mean of 163 days in 2019). We are pleased with these turnaround figures as they represent a rapid review process, without compromising quality and despite the challenge of finding reviewers. In comparison to other journals, these timelines are fast and a strength of the journal.



**Figure 5:** Turnaround times trend for the last five years

## The Editorial Advisory Board (EAB)

We are pleased to welcome six new members of the editorial advisory board: Nicola Credland (United Kingdom), Professor Anne-Sylvie Ramelet (Switzerland), A/Prof Erwin Ista (Netherlands), Dr Joseph Manning (UK) Dr Agnes van den Hoogen (Netherlands) and Dr Chao Huang (UK) our new statistical advisor since October 2020. We are also pleased to welcome 130 new reviewers for our journal since December 2019.

This year we also reviewed the membership of the EAB, and some members chose to step down from the board due to their workload and we replaced them with more paediatric and a neonatal member and with the addition of a new statistical advisor. We have a virtual EAB meeting planned for the 14 December 2020 and we intend to hold one of these meetings every year, probably near year end.

## **Special Issues**

Dr Wendy Walker and Dr Nikos Efstathiou guest edited a special issue on Dying, death and end-of-life care (Issue 25-5), whereas the editors edited another special issue on psychological aspects of intensive care (Issue 25-2). We have also created more informal 'themed' issues grouped around popular topics such as early mobilisation, patient experience and the psychological impact on the ICU environment on patients and staff.

## **Participation in the BACCN Conference**

The journal Editors in conjunction with the British Association of Critical Care Nurses (BACCN) delivered three sessions at the virtual BAACN conference in September 2020: How to write for publication, how to review for an academic journal and we also ran a live journal update session with live Q &As. These are all recorded and now available on the resources section of the BACCN website for members. The editors were also available for individual online meetings. This allowed the editors to meet with delegates and provide guidance to those interested in getting published.

## **Journal management team**

The Journal Management Board (The BACCN chair and journal liaison officer, two representatives of the journal publishing management team from Wiley, the editors and Interns) meets virtually every other month to discuss policy and practice and share developments with the BACCN to discuss governance and formalise the tripartite collaboration. Several other meetings were held between the editors, associate editors, editorial interns and different members of the Wiley editorial and production team. This year, Mr Mark Wilson was appointed BACCN journal liaison officer and News Editor for the journal. Our publishing manager, Lydia Charles, has continued to provide us with her wisdom and guidance from Wiley. The editors also worked closely with three associate managing editors (Dr Sarah Bremner, Dr Caitlin Brown and Hilary Baribeau), two editorial assistants (Jayashree Marmuthu and Shwetha Ramachandran), three production editors (Gheron Lising, Rexlyn Ressoreccion and Lymjel Popelo), three marketing managers (Steph Astill, Alex Turcea and Aimee Spiller) and two Journals Publishing Assistants (Melanie Jensen and Tom Harley-McKeown). We are very grateful for their work in the journal's day to day management.



## **The Internship Programme**

We have appointed two new editorial interns: Dr Nikos Efstathiou and Dr Sarah Vollam, they commenced their internship in September 2020. They are being involved in

- assigning reviewers
- managing peer-review feedback
- dealing with inquiries and contentious issues
- responding to inquiries
- checking proofs for standard of English and presentation
- selecting accepted papers for a particular issue and managing putting it together
- writing the What's in this Journal (WiJ) and editorials
- participating in meetings with editors, editorial team and BACCN
- volunteering to assist with workshops at BACCN events
- production of future special Issues
- promoting the journal on social media.

## **Reviewer Performance**

Each year, all members of the editorial advisory board and panel of reviewers are thanked each for their valuable contributions and reminded of their role in the journal. After each review, the reviewer can gain recognition for their contribution through Publons.

The journal has received 254 submissions (from January 2020 up to 14 November 2020). The average submissions per month is 23 (range 11-35). This means we require around 46 reviewers every month. At times it has become increasingly problematic to secure reviews. We are extremely indebted to the hard work and time spent by our committed reviewers, some who have contributed exceptionally in 2020.

Our top 20 reviewers by review completion for 2020 (excluding the editors, associate editor and editorial interns) were:

Credland, Nicola	15
Waters, David	13
Coville, Gillian	11
Craske, Jennie	10
Price, Ann	10
Ista, Erwin	9
Bruttin, Madeleine	8
Chapman, Susan	8
Dunne, Nina	8
Paul, Fiona	8
Hurvitz, Nancy	7
Sylvie Ramelet, Anne	7
Yunker, Jackie	7
Collins, Tim	6
Couper, Keith	6
Prescott, Stephen	6
Timmins, Fiona	6
Ullman, Amanda	6

**Table 1:** List of top 20 reviewers by reviewers completed

We are indebted to Hillary Baribeau, Shwetha Ramachandran and Tom Harley-Mckeown for the following statistics extracted from manuscript central based on new manuscripts submitted between January and 14 November 2020 (N=254). A total of 1042 requests were made for a reviewer (a substantial 55% increase from 574 last year) with a response of 517 who agreed and 467 who either declined or failed to respond to the invitation. This indicates a 45% decline rate (a slight increase from 43% last year) and an average of 2.23 declines per paper (an increase from 2.03 last year).

On occasion, this can rise as high as six or more declines per paper. Although there used to be peak times of the academic year that influenced this outcome, latterly, the issue has remained consistent throughout the year creating a significant burden on the editorial team attempting to locate reviewers (and also resulting in poor performance statistics and turnaround times). Delayed reviewer replies to requests, no replies to requests and late reviews returned have affected this outcome. This has resulted in the editorial team undertaking a significant quota of the reviewing burden (as second reviewer) to ensure manuscripts are turned around in as timely a fashion to meet the outcome of 34 days

average turnaround (Reviews undertaken: JT 73, LT 36, WW 15, SV 10, NE 7) from January 2020 until 14th November 2020).

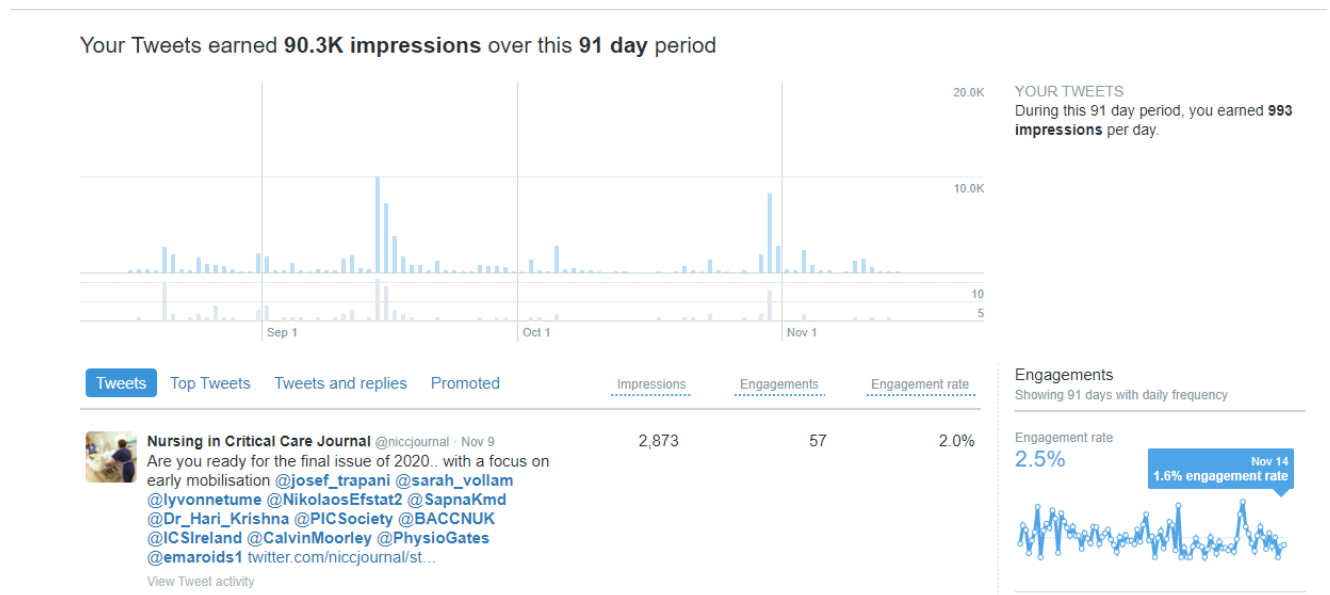
This has created delays and does mean that disproportionate amount of reviewing is undertaken by a few reviewers. In addition, reviewers who have previously reviewed a paper are declining to review a revised submission, making it very difficult to send this to a new reviewer (both for the reviewer and for the author), which further increases the workload of the editorial team members who have to review such revised manuscripts themselves. The editors that note an increasing incidence of reviewers declining offers to review a manuscript is not restricted to our journal. Indeed, colleagues identified this was not uncommon in their experience on other journals. Strategies to enhance acceptance to review included:

- Incorporating Publons recognition (in 2019) into the manuscript handling system, which issues a formal certificate and thanks for reviewing recording the number of reviews undertaken by individuals.
- To recognise and award the top 20 reviewers each year in the annual report in addition to posting the annual certificate thanking members for their reviewing commitments, we state the actual numbers they have undertaken for the journal each year
- To continue our recruitment strategy to broaden the panel of reviewers advertising for new reviewers produced 130 new reviewers over the last year. We need to expand further as reviewers resign from the panel.
- This year are recruitment strategy involved several appeals to join the reviewing panel through our Twitter account, at the BACCN conference and by personal contact with key clinicians and/or academics in the critical field with moderate effect. Nonetheless, we rely on our EAB members to use similar systems to recruit more peer reviewers in their own professional networks which may potentially increase the number of reviewers substantially. Interested parties should express their interest to review by emailing the editors.

## **Social Media**






A new journal Twitter account @NiCCJournal was set up and started in January 2020. Both editors and now the editorial interns tweet about each issue and then about individual

papers in every issue and have also used this account to call for reviewers (with much success), advertise editorial intern applications and promote the journal and its developments. As of mid-November 2020, we have over 1130 followers from across the world. Between the launch of the Twitter account in January 2020 and the end of October 2020, there was a 124.5% increase in account visits (from 1,357 to 3,047) and a 131.9% increase in page views (from 1,915 to 4,441). From August to November 2020 we had 90.3K tweet impressions (993 per day) (Figure 6). We registered the hashtag #niccjournal to enable us to more accurately review our twitter metrics.



**Figure 6:** August- November 2020 Twitter impressions/activity

### Areas of Good practice

-  Constructive, directive and enabling feedback given to authors
-  Regular and strong lines of communication between the journal editorial, management and production teams and the BACCN.
-  High rate of research papers and quality initiatives (practice development) submissions from authors with different levels and types of experience and expertise in various locations and settings addressing important clinical issues
-  Commitment to maintain the journal’s readership base, and open new markets through innovation and quality assurance
-  Clarity of guidelines for authors which have been revised in line with the new web-based layout. These have been flagged through social media.

- ✿ A proactive approach in improving services and experience of authors
- ✿ A commitment to governance and sustainability of the journal in collaboration with BACCN
- ✿ Despite difficulties in securing reviewers the average time from submission to first decision is 34 days.
- ✿ Strong support from the Wiley team and their enthusiastic guidance in support of adopting new social media strategies and other approaches to publicise papers to a worldwide readership.

### Objectives for 2021

- Move to an online only format from January 2021 and review the impact of this on readership and subscriptions
- Publish accepted abstracts from the BACCN conference in the following issue of NICC
- New journal hashtag #niccjournal to enable us to better track our twitter metrics
- Revise and provide more detailed author guidance for manuscript types and new revised more detailed guidance for papers that use statistical analysis (launch in early 2020)
- Maintain excellence in the quality of journal content
- Continue to improve the journal performance in terms of Impact Factor and citations
- Increase online presence and Twitter followers
- Continue to monitor timelines from submission to final acceptance and reduce timelines
- Proactively recruit new reviewers
- Consider instituting new system whereby authors can suggest two reviewers with clear checks and guidance in place to avoid any negative implications
- Review the targets for each reviewer and EAB membership
- Updating our systems for detecting and managing reuse, redundant publication and plagiarism
- Setting up guidelines for recruiting “ad hoc” reviewers, through Publons and Google Scholar
- Continue with annual reports being circulated online and virtual EAB meetings (recorded) every year.

Lyvonne Tume and Josef Trapani  
December 2020

