



Editorial

In Our Commitment to Science

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Dear readers and authors of Xjenza Online, as Editor-in-Chief, I am very pleased to announce the release of the first regular issue of 2022 of Xjenza Online.

I am very glad that this year, with the valuable assistance and contribution of the two dedicated and skillful copy editors of Xjenza Online, Julia Curmi and Josse Schubert, the journal was able to start releasing Online First the articles accepted for publication in a timely manner, a tangible evidence of our commitment to the ongoing improvement of the services we provide.

The issue opens with a study by Cutajar et al. on the moving patterns of five loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) rescued in Maltese waters and rehabilitated at the Aquaculture Directorate at Fort San Luċjan. The GPS tracking revealed that the turtles frequented the same main region to the South of the Maltese islands, typically the Libyan and Tunisian neritic coastal zones covered similar mean distances (11.2–22.4 km/day), despite differences in their life-stages and physical abilities.

The following article by Agius et al. focuses on the self-reported stressors and experiences of Maltese dental academics during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of an anonymous survey showed that the academics accepted the online platforms for lecturing and examinations, but they were highly concerned about the lack of students' practice during the lockdown which cannot be compensated by online tutoring.

Next, Camilleri et al. identifies the risk factors of aortic valve replacement using two types of frailty models (i.e. shared and unshared). The participants in this study were patients who underwent an aortic valve replacement procedure at a Maltese hospital between 2003 and 2019. The dependent variable

is the duration till death or till censored and the eleven predictors provide information about the patients' health condition, surgery operative procedures, and duration of convalesce period.

Subsequently, yet another reflection of how much the Covid-19 pandemic affected the world's population. Diacono et al. assessed the impact of Covid-19 on healthcare workers and front-liners working in Malta including stress levels, work load, and their psychological well-being, while emphasizing the need for enhanced support from government entities, education and awareness regarding mental health and available assistance.

The paper by Theuma and Abela then estimates price multipliers and their decomposition effects for the Maltese economy, based on the 2010 micro social accounting matrix. Importantly, these price multipliers provide a first cut estimate of assessing price effects in terms of intermediary input costs, wages costs and cost-of-living adjustments following exogenous cost changes.

The issue concludes with a review by Abela et al. on the recent developments in the use elastomers for orthopaedic implants. The range of applications of elastomers vary from hip joint replacements, meniscal implants, and first metatarsophalangeal joint replacements. Typically, silicones, polyurethanes and hydrogels are preferred due to their good mechanical properties, chemical resistance and biocompatibility, but there are other promising emerging materials such as polycarbonate urethanes.

To conclude, as today's research is a global endeavour, so remains our commitment to serve the local professional scientific community.

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