



*Editorial*

## Xjenza: the key for a brighter future

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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 second issue of 2019 of Xjenza Online. I know that the issue came out much later than expected, but both the journal and the world has undergone several changes lately.

In addition to the launch of a brand-new website for the journal, [www.xjenza.org](http://www.xjenza.org), there were also a few more recent key replacements of the members of the Editorial Board. I am glad and grateful that after months of recruitment and training Luke Collins joined our team as Copy Editor. A warm welcome also to Chloe Manning and Ellie Kift as Editorial Assistants. I take this opportunity to thank them all for their time, efforts and assistance.

Under the current circumstances, scientific research is a priority, and so remains our focus in this issue of Xjenza Online, both in the original research we publish and in our news coverage.

The issue opens with an important study by Attard et al. to assess the physicochemical characteristics of biochar from manure generated on three different livestock farms in Malta especially since manure is currently incurring a significant risk in creating environmental pollution. The research reveals that pyrolysis of manure has the ability to render organic nitrogen into inert nitrogen gas and, hence, reduces manure biomass volumes.

The following manuscript by Galea et.al investigates the relationship between air pollution and spontaneous pneumothorax (SP), a sudden onset of a collapsed lung without any apparent cause which occurs frequently in young male asthmatics and smokers. An observational study

on consecutive patients admitted with SP to Mater Dei Hospital from January 2010 to December 2014 indicated that enhanced air pollution seems to increase the incidence of SP.

Next, the article by Bozionelos et al. evaluates the effectiveness of an extended but temporary local network of seismic stations on the Maltese islands to efficiently monitor seismic activity, determine the seismic source, and eventually contribute to the seismotectonic interpretation and seismic hazard assessment. The results of this investigation are instrumental for the future installation of permanent seismic stations on the Maltese islands.

The issue concludes with a news address by Gianluca Valentino, the President of Malta Chamber of Scientists, who on behalf of the recently revamped Council structure is proudly presenting their current plans in order to consolidate a strong voice and vision of the Chamber within the local scientific landscape.

To conclude, I wish you all to stay strong and safe. Let us hope that science will prevail once more, and innovative means of treatment and prevention of the COVID-19 disease will be in place soon. Meanwhile, Xjenza Online will continue to serve the local professional scientific community, to publish high-quality original findings in a peer-reviewed environment, and to help early-career researchers to advance their scientific discourse in the community.

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