



Editorial

Twenty Years of Xjenza: Celebration of a Long Journey (1996–2016)

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This year, Xjenza Online, one of the first Maltese journals covering all the branches of science, celebrates its twentieth anniversary. During the past two decades - since the first issues of artisanal workmanship until now - the journal has gone through many phases, has overcome challenges, has undergone changes in format and editorial policy, but it has remained true to its original purpose of being a prestigious means of dissemination of studies on science and, in particular, a critical observatory of the Maltese scientific reality.

The celebration of this important anniversary invites reflection and thus inescapable findings. In this regard, the readers find reproduced here pertinent speeches given by Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, CEO of MCST, Mr Kevin J. Ellul, University of Malta Director Library Services, University of Malta and Professor Alfred J. Vella, Rector of the University of Malta, on the occasion of the Celebration of *Xjenza 20* on the 23rd of September 2016 at the Aula Magna, University of Malta, Valletta Campus. These speeches highlight the importance of Xjenza and scientific publications in Science and Technology for national development (Figs. 1, 2, 3).



Figure 1: From the left, Rector Professor Alfred J. Vella, President of the Malta Chamber of Scientists Professor Alex Felice and E-i-C of Xjenza Professor Giuseppe Di Giovanni, at Celebrating Xjenza 20th Anniversary ceremony Aula Magna, Old University in Valletta on the 23rd of September 2016.



Figure 2: From the left, Joseph Grima (Xjenza Editor 2003–2007), current associate editors Joseph Galea (Medical Sciences), Liberato Camilleri (Mathematical and Statistical Science), Angela A. Xuereb Anastasi (Xjenza Editor 1996–2003), current associate editors Ian Thornton (Cognitive and Social Sciences), Giuseppe Di Giovanni (current Xjenza Editor), Philip Farrugia (Engineering Science), David Magri (Physics and Chemical Science), Ian Cassar (Economics), Mauro Pessia (Editorial Board member) at the Celebrating Xjenza 20th Anniversary ceremony on the 23rd of September 2016, Valletta.

The Xjenza team also includes: Sebastiano D'Amico (Geosciences), David Mifsud (Life Science), Nicholas Sammut (Information and Communication Technologies), Carmel Cefai (Psychological Science), Godfrey Baldacchino (Social Sciences), the Copy Editor Jackson Said, the Editorial Assistants Katie Haywood and Amber Crews-Rees, Copy Editor Gabriel Farrugia and the Web Administrator John Gabarretta.

It must be recognized that in the past twenty years Xjenza has made significant efforts to achieve genuine internationalization. With this, we mean that, on the one hand, since its inception, Xjenza has stood out for the strong presence of international authors in its editions, not only in its editorial committee, but also in the authorship of articles or participation in interviews. On the other hand, in recent years, it has undertaken numerous efforts to ensure that Maltese research and production is disseminated and recognized. This is our commitment to the academic community, and our peers.

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Figure 3: From the left, E-i-C of Xjenza Professor Giuseppe Di Giovanni and President of the Malta Chamber of Scientists Professor Alex Felice at Celebrating Xjenza 20th Anniversary ceremony on the 23rd of September 2016, Valletta.

This time, to mark the twentieth anniversary of Xjenza, its editorial board has planned this second commemorative issue of volume 4, which clearly expresses its desire for internationalization.

Moreover, in this volume, we present 3 commentaries on various hot issues in science. This is a new type of article that we have introduced in this issue, under editor invitation. The authors of these commentaries have in-depth knowledge of the topic and are eager to present a new and/or unique viewpoint on existing problems, fundamental concepts, or prevalent notions, or want to discuss the implications of a newly implemented innovation. We hope, in this way, to advance the research field by providing a forum for varying perspectives on a certain topic under consideration in the journal. The first of them, brings together 4 researchers from the Institute of Space Sciences and Astronomy, outlining the research projects of the Gravity Research Group at the University of Malta. The second commentary, written by Dr Roberto Frau, a new member of our editorial board from Italy, focuses on a new treatment for Tourette syndrome. Over the years, Frau and colleagues have demonstrated that the pharmacological inhibition, by drugs such as finasteride, of rate-limiting enzyme in androgens and neurosteroids synthesis, 5-alpha reductase, elicits therapeutic effects in animal models of TS. Unfortunately, the clinical applications of this drug on Tourette syndrome therapy remain limited; in fact, finasteride cannot be prescribed in children, who represent the broadest target population in this disorder; moreover it has been shown to possibly induce depression and reduction of libido. Dr Frau, for these reasons, stresses the importance of identification of the neurobiological bases and molecular mechanisms underlying the effects of finasteride and

other similar drugs to overcome their limitations. The last commentary is authored by Dr Maurizio Casarubea, another Italian member of our editorial team, on critical review of anxiety and anxiety-related behaviour analysis and the importance of T-pattern analysis, as a new technique able to evaluate the temporal characteristics of sequences of events of behaviours.

This issue includes three research articles. Liberato and colleagues recommend using the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ), proposed by Goodman in 1997, to measure social, emotional and behaviour, to adopt i) a multilevel structural equation model that accommodates both the hierarchical nested structure of the data, but also caters for the latent factor structure in the data and ii) to include student, classroom, school and home predictors in the model. The article by Carveni and colleagues from Italy describes the geological, geomorphological and archaeological sites in Pachino and Portopalo di Capo Passero areas in Sicily. Finally, Mifsud et al., focus their research on the flora of Selmunett (St. Paul's Island) including mosses and lichens. These are examined critically, identifying possible misidentifications as well as establishing their status, thus producing a final update of the florula of Selmunett.

Two interesting reviews on biomedical subjects complete the issue. The front cover is dedicated to the very interesting review written by Joseph Galea on the pathobiology of Saphenous vein grafts; the commonest conduit used for coronary artery bypass surgery, and the second by Bonetta and colleagues on protein structure-based approaches to drug discovery.

This second issue of the Jubilee volume (4) ends as usual with the News section. The last six months of 2016 have been very rich in scientific events in which Xjenza has played a major role. First, you will find the talks given at the Celebration of *Xjenza 20* by eminent speakers, followed by a piece by David Magri, the curator of Science in the House, organised by the Malta Chamber of Scientists, the University Research Trust (RIDT) and the Science in the City/European Researchers' Night consortium. Science in the City, European Researchers' Night is funded by the EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action of the Horizon 2020 (H2020) Programme.

We have continued the traditional and important aim of Xjenza Online to offer training in the art of scientific publishing in a peer-reviewed environment for young and more experienced researchers. With this aim, Xjenza, with ELSEVIER and the Library of University of Malt, was involved in the organization of a workshop on how to publish on the 23rd of October. This was very successful and drew in significant interest from the general public. Indeed, this will be repeated next year during the 6th Mediterranean Neuroscience Con-

ference that the Malta Chamber of Scientists and the Malta Neuroscience Network is organizing for the Mediterranean Neuroscience Society in June 12th–15th, 2017 at the Radisson in St Julian's. For Xjenja Online and neuroscience in Malta, this will be a fantastic showcase, indeed Xjenja Online will have a Special Issue for the Proceedings of the conference and a print copy will be distributed to all the attendees.

Publishing this special issue was the way in which the editorial board has chosen to celebrate the anniversary of Xjenja Online together with readers. And, finally,

we expect this issue to fully demonstrate our conviction that scientific journals are important sources of information for teaching and research activities, and thus constitute an input for research and the development of science. On this anniversary, besides celebrating the maturity of Xjenja, we would like to congratulate and thank all those who daily make great efforts to ensure this important journal continues to exist.

Giuseppe Di Giovanni
Editor in Chief