



Editorial

The increasing visibility of *Forensic Chemistry*

It's been four years since the first manuscript was submitted to *Forensic Chemistry (FORC)*. In the relatively short time since then, the journal has considered 417 manuscripts. In 2019, the submissions increased 21% over the previous year and the overall acceptance rate in 2019 was ~56% of the submitted manuscripts. The *FORC* Cite Score¹ has increased steadily from 1.2 in 2017 to 1.88 in 2018, and based on the current CiteScore Tracker, the *FORC* CiteScore is projected to be 2.52 for 2019. The high citation rate of our articles demonstrates the impact *FORC* is having on the forensic chemistry community and compares favorably with other leading forensic science and analytical chemistry journals. For example, 2019 CiteScores are projected to be ~1.52 for the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* and ~2.48 for *Forensic Science International*.

Our publications are abstracted with all the major abstracting databases, and articles published in *FORC* were read (full-text downloads) 115,000 times in 2019 alone. Four highlighted articles in 2019 include [Chemical Profiling of Fingerprints Using Mass Spectrometry](#) by Helmond, et al., [A Multi-laboratory Investigation of Drug Background Levels](#) by Sisco, et al., [Preparation, Characterization, and Application of a Lipophilic Coated Exfoliated Egyptian Blue for Near-infrared Luminescent Latent Fingerprint Detection](#) by Shahbasi, et al. and [Phenotype Profiling for Forensic Purposes: Nondestructive Potentially On Scene Attenuated Total Reflection Fourier Transform-infrared \(ATR FT-IR\) Spectroscopy of Bloodstains](#) by Mistek, et al.

In his capacity as a member of the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC), one of the *FORC* editors (Jose Almirall), recently conducted an analysis [1] of the potential impact of documentary standards on the practice of forensic chemistry in the USA. The connection between the need for research and the standardization process is clear. *FORC* has been responsive in addressing the need to publish applied research reports, including the necessary validation and interlaboratory studies that lead to consensus in the recommendations to the practitioner community. According to the most recent census of publicly funded forensic laboratories [2] (2016), there were 3.8 M requests for forensic laboratory services in the US alone. Approximately one third of the requests involved the analysis of seized drugs, and these figures agree with a separate survey conducted by the 2018 National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) [3]. NFLIS also reported close to 2 M seized drugs cases analyzed in 2018 in the US when all of the ~400 federal, state and local government labs are taken into account.

The DOJ/OJP/BJA analysis [2] also revealed that 15% of the

forensic casework requests involved toxicology evidence, which is in close agreement with the ~600,000 toxicology cases estimated by the 2017–2018 Project Foresight [4] report. In addition, approximately 100,000 cases of materials (trace) analyses and comparisons, fire debris analysis, gunshot residue (GSR) analysis and other forensic chemistry evidence are projected by Project Foresight for the same time periods. The total number of forensic chemistry cases that are potentially impacted by basic and applied research in forensic chemistry is estimated to reach ~2.7 M cases. The impact of forensic chemistry research to society ultimately reaches millions of people in the USA alone.

FORC remains committed to publishing high-quality research to improve the quality of scientific evidence, including applied research reports that aid in the standardization of forensic science practice. In recognition of our efforts to promote rapid publication of high-quality and practical research, we are pleased to report that The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) has now designated *FORC* as a preferred journal of their society. *FORC* and ASCLD agreed to a reciprocity agreement in which they list *FORC* as a preferred journal of their society, and *FORC* offers ASCLD members enhanced access to *FORC* publications.

FORC is the only journal specifically devoted to the publication of research and practice in the field of forensic chemistry. We are very thankful to the authors, reviewers, editorial board members, our publishing staff at Elsevier and, of course, you, our readers, for making the journal a success. To help promote the articles in *Forensic Chemistry*, Elsevier graciously sponsored two prizes at the SciX 2019 conference in Palm Springs, CA. The [best oral presentation](#) in the area of forensic chemistry was awarded to Shelby R. Khandasamy from Prof. Lednev's group at SUNY Albany, USA, for the presentation entitled "New Horizons in Organic Gunshot Residue Analysis." The [best poster presentation](#) in the area of forensic chemistry was awarded to Sarah N. Wright from University of Notre Dame, USA, for the work entitled "Battling the Backlog: Capillary Zone Electrophoresis Automated Fraction Collection for the Forensic Analysis of Sexual Assault Evidence."

We are very grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve the forensic chemistry community and encourage the submissions of high-quality research findings to *FORC*. Our gratitude goes out to our selfless editorial board members and to the hundreds of reviewers who help ensure the quality of the accepted articles. Please feel free to contact us with any suggestions as we endeavor to make *FORC* the best journal for publishing forensic chemistry research.

¹ CiteScore 2018 counts the citations received in 2018 to documents published in 2015, 2016 or 2017, and divides this by the number of documents published in 2015, 2016 and 2017. CiteScoreTracker 2019 uses the same methodology with citations based on the latest 2019 data (<https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/21100788802>).

Sincerely,
Jose R. Almirall (forensicchem@fiu.edu) and Glen P. Jackson,
Editors-in Chief
March 2020

References

- [1] Presentation to the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) and to the Chemistry Scientific Area Committee (SAC) of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) on Dec. 4, 2019.
- [2] Burch, A. M., Durose, M. R., Walsh, K. A., & Tiry, E. (2016). Publicly funded forensic crime laboratories: Quality assurance practices, 2014. U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Washington, DC: Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/pffclqap14.pdf>.
- [3] Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Diversion Control Division, National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS). (2018). 2017 Medical Examiner/Coroner Office Survey Report. Retrieved from <https://www.nfis.dea/diversion.usdoj.gov/DesktopModules/ReportDownloads/Reports/NFLIS-MECSurveyReport.pdf>.
- [4] Project Foresight Annual Report 2017-2018, Paul Speaker.