

Vertical Transmission



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President of ASM

A belated Happy New Year everyone! The year is rolling on quickly and no doubt most of us are back to our busy schedule. As travel becomes more normal again, this year promises to bring many changes and we look forward to renewing friendships with international collaborators and welcoming international students back to our university campuses. That said, the uncertainty of COVID-19 infection remains, with many of us due to be offered a fifth dose of a vaccine that we never even knew of ~3.5 years ago – a constant reminder to us all of the power of science and the importance of microbiology!

One of the first things on this year's agenda is ASM Hour, which will start again in March. Our theme leaders have assembled a great list of topics and there are fantastic talks lined up. A change from previous years is that we will use the same link for all ASM Hour sessions. Hopefully this will make these talks more accessible to all of our membership. I would also like to remind you about our Communication Ambassador Program. Our ambassadors contribute to ASM's communication channels by sharing content on ASM events,

showcasing their work and serving as public advocates for microbiology. We provide all ambassadors with professional communication training covering social media strategies, fostering a personal brand online, and becoming an online influencer in science and beyond. If you are an early career researcher (ECR) and are interested in joining this program, check out the application on our website (closes 31 March).

Life continues to throw up challenges, and I would like to extend my sincere condolences to any of our members whose family have been affected by the devastating earthquakes in southern Türkiye and Syria, or the severe flooding in New Zealand. Our thoughts are with you at this difficult time, and I hope you can reach out to your support networks if you need help. As microbiologists, we are acutely aware of the terrible diseases such as cholera and tetanus that can follow such disasters, and we hope these regions can avoid such potentially devastating infections.

Our 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth is approaching fast and registrations are open. I encourage everyone planning to attend the conference to book your travel early, as the cost of flights may rise quickly. We are also offering fifty \$200-discount registrations for the conference to students and ECRs with up to 5 years of equivalent experience post their highest qualification. We have a fantastic list of International Plenary speakers, as well as highlight presentations from our own Prof. Julian Rood (Rubbo Orator) and Prof. Dena Lyras (just announced as our Distinguished Orator Award winner) – congratulations to both of you! There is a link on the ASM Homepage that will take you directly to the ASM Conference website. I hope to see many of you there!