

Welcoming 2021

After a year turned upside-down by the COVID-19 pandemic, and now with promising vaccine news on the horizon, we can start looking forward to a new year with the hope that 2021 will bring exciting things to the science community. Here, *Nature Genetics* shares what we are awaiting in 2021.

Watching the coronavirus outbreak wreak havoc on the health and livelihoods of so many people has made us find the scientific community's amazingly rapid response to this challenge even more impressive. Despite the heavy toll that the virus has taken, we can admire the efforts put forth and the ingenuity displayed by so many laboratories worldwide. We are not entirely through the crisis, but we can start to look forward to the year to come.

This February will be the 20th anniversary of the [release of the draft of the human genome](#) in 2001. This milestone anniversary allows us to look back on this landmark achievement through two decades of technological development and scientific advances. Now, 20 years later, we are constructing human pan-genomes ([Human Pan-genome Reference Consortium](#)) and assembling complete genomes ([Telomere-to-Telomere Consortium](#)). We anticipate celebrating this anniversary by reflecting back but also awaiting what will be accomplished in human genomics in 2021.

A highlight of the year was from August 2020, when the group [BlackInGenetics](#) (BIG) organized a 'BlackInGeneticsWeek' on Twitter to amplify the voices of Black geneticists and serve as a platform

providing resources and education for the community. BlackInGeneticsWeek was organized by two PhD students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Alex Stutzman (founder of BlackInGenetics) and Markia Smith (president of BlackInGenetics), who turned one busy and successful week on Twitter into an organization with broader goals to address the needs and priorities of self-identifying Black scientists in the genetics community. We are excited about working with this amazing group, and we cannot wait to see what they do next. We are looking forward to BlackInGeneticsWeek 2021.

One major adjustment that we all made in 2020 was to the lack of in-person meetings and conferences. Many meetings scheduled for 2021 either have gone virtual or have been postponed. For example, the International Congress of Human Genetics (ICHG) has moved their planned 2021 [meeting in Cape Town](#), South Africa, to 2022. The ICHG convenes every 5 years, so we were eagerly anticipating this 14th congress, with the theme 'Coming Home—Africa' and hosted by the [African Society of Human Genetics](#) and the [Southern African Society for Human Genetics](#). We will save our excitement about this meeting for 2022,

and we hope that with the vaccine rollout, other opportunities for travel or meetings will arise by the end of the year.

As always, we are looking forward to publishing great genetics in 2021. Some areas that we think are of particular interest include [clonal hematopoiesis](#), [pan-genomes](#), [three-dimensional chromatin architecture](#), [genetics studies from more diverse cohorts](#), and tools for [trans-ancestry analysis](#) and [for neurogenomics](#). We recognize that many laboratories went through periods of shutdown this year and that researchers have dealt with unprecedented challenges in their personal and professional lives. We hope that in 2021, scientists will have an easier time planning and performing experiments, analyzing data, establishing collaborations and doing the work that they most enjoy.

Finally, our greatest hope is that we will be able to take the insights and lessons learned from 2020 and use them to shape how we approach science and society in the future, working toward strengthening community ties. Here's to the dawning of 2021. We remain hopeful for an exciting year in genetics. □

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