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Preface

The 24th edition of the International Conference on Medical Image Computing and Computer Assisted Intervention (MICCAI 2021) has for the second time been placed under the shadow of COVID-19. Complicated situations due to the pandemic and multiple lockdowns have affected our lives during the past year, sometimes perturbing the researchers work, but also motivating an extraordinary dedication from many of our colleagues, and significant scientific advances in the fight against the virus. After another difficult year, most of us were hoping to be able to travel and finally meet in person at MICCAI 2021, which was supposed to be held in Strasbourg, France. Unfortunately, due to the uncertainty of the global situation, MICCAI 2021 had to be moved again to a virtual event that was held over five days from September 27 to October 1, 2021. Taking advantage of the experience gained last year and of the fast-evolving platforms, the organizers of MICCAI 2021 redesigned the schedule and the format. To offer the attendees both a strong scientific content and an engaging experience, two virtual platforms were used: Pathable for the oral and plenary sessions and SpatialChat for lively poster sessions, industrial booths, and networking events in the form of interactive group video chats.

These proceedings of MICCAI 2021 showcase all 531 papers that were presented at the main conference, organized into eight volumes in the Lecture Notes in Computer Science (LNCS) series as follows:

- Part I, LNCS Volume 12901: Image Segmentation
- Part II, LNCS Volume 12902: Machine Learning 1
- Part III, LNCS Volume 12903: Machine Learning 2
- Part IV, LNCS Volume 12904: Image Registration and Computer Assisted Intervention
- Part V, LNCS Volume 12905: Computer Aided Diagnosis
- Part VI, LNCS Volume 12906: Image Reconstruction and Cardiovascular Imaging
- Part VII, LNCS Volume 12907: Clinical Applications
- Part VIII, LNCS Volume 12908: Microscopic, Ophthalmic, and Ultrasound Imaging

These papers were selected after a thorough double-blind peer review process. We followed the example set by past MICCAI meetings, using Microsoft's Conference Managing Toolkit (CMT) for paper submission and peer reviews, with support from the Toronto Paper Matching System (TPMS), to partially automate paper assignment to area chairs and reviewers, and from iThenticate to detect possible cases of plagiarism.

Following a broad call to the community we received 270 applications to become an area chair for MICCAI 2021. From this group, the program chairs selected a total of 96 area chairs, aiming for diversity — MIC versus CAI, gender, geographical region, and

a mix of experienced and new area chairs. Reviewers were recruited also via an open call for volunteers from the community (288 applications, of which 149 were selected by the program chairs) as well as by re-inviting past reviewers, leading to a total of 1340 registered reviewers.

We received 1630 full paper submissions after an original 2667 intentions to submit. Four papers were rejected without review because of concerns of (self-)plagiarism and dual submission and one additional paper was rejected for not adhering to the MICCAI page restrictions; two further cases of dual submission were discovered and rejected during the review process. Five papers were withdrawn by the authors during review and after acceptance.

The review process kicked off with a reviewer tutorial and an area chair meeting to discuss the review process, criteria for MICCAI acceptance, how to write a good (meta-)review, and expectations for reviewers and area chairs. Each area chair was assigned 16–18 manuscripts for which they suggested potential reviewers using TPMS scores, self-declared research area(s), and the area chair's knowledge of the reviewers' expertise in relation to the paper, while conflicts of interest were automatically avoided by CMT. Reviewers were invited to bid for the papers for which they had been suggested by an area chair or which were close to their expertise according to TPMS. Final reviewer allocations via CMT took account of reviewer bidding, prioritization of area chairs, and TPMS scores, leading to on average four reviews performed per person by a total of 1217 reviewers.

Following the initial double-blind review phase, area chairs provided a meta-review summarizing key points of reviews and a recommendation for each paper. The program chairs then evaluated the reviews and their scores, along with the recommendation from the area chairs, to directly accept 208 papers (13%) and reject 793 papers (49%); the remainder of the papers were sent for rebuttal by the authors. During the rebuttal phase, two additional area chairs were assigned to each paper. The three area chairs then independently ranked their papers, wrote meta-reviews, and voted to accept or reject the paper, based on the reviews, rebuttal, and manuscript. The program chairs checked all meta-reviews, and in some cases where the difference between rankings was high or comments were conflicting, they also assessed the original reviews, rebuttal, and submission. In all other cases a majority voting scheme was used to make the final decision. This process resulted in the acceptance of a further 325 papers for an overall acceptance rate of 33%.

Acceptance rates were the same between medical image computing (MIC) and computer assisted interventions (CAI) papers, and slightly lower where authors classified their paper as both MIC and CAI. Distribution of the geographical region of the first author as indicated in the optional demographic survey was similar among submitted and accepted papers.

New this year, was the requirement to fill out a reproducibility checklist when submitting an intention to submit to MICCAI, in order to stimulate authors to think about what aspects of their method and experiments they should include to allow others to reproduce their results. Papers that included an anonymous code repository and/or indicated that the code would be made available were more likely to be accepted. From all accepted papers, 273 (51%) included a link to a code repository with the camera-ready submission.

Another novelty this year is that we decided to make the reviews, meta-reviews, and author responses for accepted papers available on the website. We hope the community will find this a useful resource.

The outstanding program of MICCAI 2021 was enriched by four exceptional keynote talks given by Alyson McGregor, Richard Satava, Fei-Fei Li, and Pierre Jannin, on hot topics such as gender bias in medical research, clinical translation to industry, intelligent medicine, and sustainable research. This year, as in previous years, high-quality satellite events completed the program of the main conference: 28 workshops, 23 challenges, and 14 tutorials; without forgetting the increasingly successful plenary events, such as the Women in MICCAI (WiM) meeting, the MICCAI Student Board (MSB) events, the 2nd Startup Village, the MICCAI-RSNA panel, and the first “Reinforcing Inclusiveness & diverSity and Empowering MICCAI” (or RISE-MICCAI) event.

MICCAI 2021 has also seen the first edition of CLINICAI, the clinical day of MICCAI. Organized by Nicolas Padoy and Lee Swannstrom, this new event will hopefully help bring the scientific and clinical communities closer together, and foster collaborations and interaction. A common keynote connected the two events. We hope this effort will be pursued in the next editions.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making MICCAI 2021 a success. First of all, we sincerely thank the authors, area chairs, reviewers, and session

chairs for their dedication and for offering the participants and readers of these proceedings content of exceptional quality. Special thanks go to our fantastic submission platform manager Kitty Wong, who has been a tremendous help in the entire process from reviewer and area chair selection, paper submission, and the review process to the preparation of these proceedings. We also thank our very efficient team of satellite events chairs and coordinators, led by Cristian Linte and Matthieu Chabanas: the workshop chairs, Amber Simpson, Denis Fortun, Marta Kersten-Oertel, and Sandrine Voros; the challenges chairs, Annika Reinke, Spyridon Bakas, Nicolas Passat, and Ingerid Reinersten; and the tutorial chairs, Sonia Pujol and Vincent Noblet, as well as all the satellite event organizers for the valuable content added to MICCAI. Our special thanks also go to John Baxter and his team who worked hard on setting up and populating the virtual platforms, to Alejandro Granados for his valuable help and efficient communication on social media, and to Shelley Wallace and Anna Van Vliet for marketing and communication. We are also very grateful to Anirban Mukhopadhyay for his management of the sponsorship, and of course many thanks to the numerous sponsors who supported the conference, often with continuous engagement over many years. This year again, our thanks go to Marius Linguraru and his team who supervised a range of actions to help, and promote, career development, among which were the mentorship program and the Startup Village. And last but not least, our wholehearted thanks go to Mehmet and the wonderful team at Dekon Congress and Tourism for their great professionalism and reactivity in the management of all logistical aspects of the event.

Finally, we thank the MICCAI society and the Board of Directors for their support throughout the years, starting with the first discussions about bringing MICCAI to Strasbourg in 2017.

We look forward to seeing you at MICCAI 2022.

September 2021

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