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Editorial

Editorial for Special Issue on "10th Anniversary of Processes: Women's Special Issue Series"

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Continuous scientific research is essential because it enables us to expand our knowledge constantly, discover new truths and develop a better understanding of reality by describing, explaining and predicting it. It also provides an opportunity to create new solutions and methods, monitor phenomena, take effective action and respond quickly to changes, ultimately leading to progress in various areas of life. The primary aim of scientific research is to discover the truth and answer new questions, forming the basis for the advancement of knowledge. It enables us to understand and describe phenomena and their relationships, and to explain their causes and effects. It enables the development of new and improved research methods and innovative solutions to problems. *Processes* is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to processes and systems in chemistry, biology, materials science, energy, the environment, food, pharmacy, production, automation, control, catalysis, separation and particle engineering, as well as related fields [1–10].

We are delighted to present this Special Issue, which showcases the achievements of female scientists in process/systems research across a range of fields, including chemistry, biology, materials science, energy, the environment, food, pharmacy, manufacturing, and related engineering disciplines. This Special Issue is dedicated to presenting the work of female scientists at all stages of their careers. In the volume of this Special Issue entitled "10th Anniversary of *Processes*: Women's Special Issue Series" (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/processes/special_issues/Women_Series_Processes; accessed on 3 October 2025), 32 articles were published, including 30 original [11–40] articles and 2 reviews [41,42]. These publications were authored by 137 scientists from the following countries: Poland, China, Romania, Mexico, Sloviaka, Palestine, USA, Malaysia, Greece, Türkiye, Djibouti, Pakistan, Taiwan, and Morocco (Figure 1).

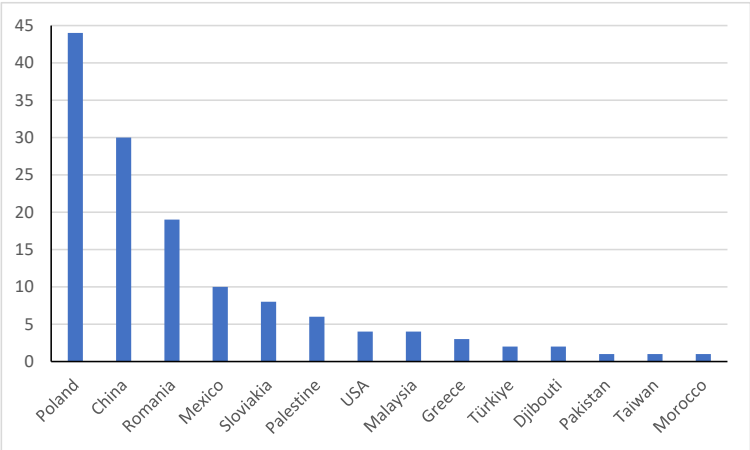


Figure 1. Geographical contributions to this Special Issue.

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From an environmental perspective, reducing household, food and industrial waste, as well as carbon dioxide emissions, is extremely important. Several articles in this Special Issue address these issues [11–16]. Vázquez-Villegas et al. [11] produced a biolubricant suitable for use in agricultural machinery from transesterified fatty acids obtained from chicken skin fat. Tests on the biolubricant's toxicity showed that, in the event of accidental spillage, it would not cause damage to soil, organisms living in it or people coming into contact with it. Olive pomace is characterized by a high content of organic compounds and polyphenols, which makes it a threat to the environment when stored in landfills and also limits its feed potential. Olive pomace may be a good candidate for biomethane production due to its rich content of polysaccharides (pectins, hemicellulose and cellulose). Two methods of biomethane production were compared. The first method involves descaling, i.e., removing seed fragments by mechanical means, and the second method involves enzymatic pre-treatment of the pulp. After 30 days, both methods produced similar amounts of methane. The study showed that olive pomace can be used for the production of second-generation biofuels, and the resulting digestate can be valuable in improving soil quality [12]. Mohamed Ali et al. [13] used food waste as raw material for biogas production, which posed certain difficulties due to the inefficient hydrolysis process. For this reason, the study focused on increasing biogas production through anaerobic fermentation. Four different fermenters were used, including a control fermenter. In the control fermenter, where no hydrolyzed food waste was used, no immobilized biofilm was found, while in the other three fermenters, immobilized biofilm was used. The fermenter containing 50% inoculum had the highest biogas yield. Anaç and Doğan [14] investigated the suitability of three types of organic waste—walnut shells, olive pomace, and mussel shells—for use in abrasive blasting. Test sets for sandblasting were developed. They found that blasting time had the greatest effect on surface roughness. In contrast, the organic material had a polishing effect rather than an abrasive one. In another study, Anaç [15] investigated how the type of material forming joint pairs affects joint strength. The highest strength was obtained in pairs of similar 3D-printed materials (Tough PLA/Tough PLA joints, 4 MPa). Among pairs of materials with different strengths, the highest strength was found in Tough PLA/galvanized steel joints (4.17 MPa). Consequently, it was concluded that TPU and Tough PLA materials produced by 3D printing could serve as an alternative to rubber. Panagiotopoulou et al. [16] investigated whether the 3D printing process is environmentally friendly. Their study revealed that carbon dioxide emissions during the process were significant compared to total carbon dioxide emissions. Furthermore, carbon dioxide emissions from the isopropanol (IPA) bath accounted for over 50% of the total carbon footprint of stereolithography (SLA). Subsequent years have seen further research in this area by other scientists [10,43–58].

Wu and Li [17] applied the discrete element method (DEM) in combination with computational fluid dynamics (CFD) to study a fluidized microbed. The authors proposed a so-called particle circumstance-dependent drag model that is dependent on a particle's complex circumstances. The results showed that the formation and fragmentation of clusters in a rapidly fluidized state with compaction are clearly captured and that both processes are synchronized in time. In another study, Wu et al. [18] used DEM to simulate the rapid fluidization of fine particles in a microfluidic bed (MFB) based on a polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxin (PCDD) model. Another manuscript [19] describes two-dimensional Kelvin–Helmholtz (KH) instability in the shear flow of polymer fluids. This instability is modeled using the dissipative particle dynamics (DPD) method. The results showed that waves and vortices grow more slowly in polymer fluid shear flow than in Newtonian fluid shear flow. Additionally, it was found that the polymer and its properties significantly influence the formation and evolution of coherent structures, such as waves and vortices,

in the KH instability process. Wu et al. [20] used DEM with an appropriate selection of constant stiffness and time step to simulate a microfluidized FCC Type A powder bed. They defined the so-called relative DEM time step. The resistance coefficient was correlated using an energy-minimization multi-scale EMMS) to calculate gas–solid interactions. Wang et al. [21] analyzed the control and discharge processes of modular multilevel converter (MMC) capacitors in the event of a fault current in a three-phase system. The outer loop control of the MMCs changes the fault injection. The authors demonstrated that the fault currents could be increased or decreased within the MMC's capacity. Huang et al. [22] used KIT-6 silica to support nickel-based catalysts. They investigated the catalytic activity of NiO/KIT-6 samples. The NiO/KIT-6 catalyst with a 10% weight concentration exhibits high catalytic efficiency in methane combustion. However, the interaction between NiO and KIT-6 in the 10% NiO/KIT-6 catalyst is weak. The surface oxygen of the NiO/KIT-6 catalyst enables high catalytic efficiency. NiO/KIT-6 catalysts demonstrate superior activity compared to SBA-15, MCF, and SiO_2 catalysts. The NiO/KIT-6 catalyst retains its ordered mesostructure and reducing properties. Xu et al. [23] performed multispherical modeling (MS) of three types of Cyperus esculentus seeds. They examined the problem of multiple contact points in the MS model. For comparison, they used the Hertz Mindlin (no slip) (HM) model and Hertz Mindlin new restitution (HMNR). They also checked the relationship between the moisture content in the seeds and Young's modulus, and between Young's modulus and the number of contact points. As the moisture content increased, the Young's modulus decreased and, at the same time, the number of contact points decreased. The importance of the problems presented in the manuscripts [17–23] is confirmed by subsequent scientific papers published on this subject by other scientists [59–72].

Hung [24] proposed a model that combines image processing, deep learning algorithms, and cloud computing. This model enables the automatic detection of anomalies in production plant operations. The novel aspect of this research is the connection between the production plant and the cloud. Su et al. [25] proposed a dynamic resource configuration structure and a hybrid algorithm that integrates manufacturing knowledge in order to solve the resource configuration problem. Malindzakova et al. [26] used Shewhart control charts to evaluate the quality of plastic moldings for the automotive industry. They subjected the width and length of the moldings to statistical analysis. The authors noted that an important condition for setting up control charts is to collect measurement values regularly and to follow the correct chronological order. Teplická and Sedláková [27] evaluated the quality of cement production at a company in Slovakia. They used statistical, economic, and financial analyses, as well as quality management tools such as Ishikawa diagrams, regression diagrams, correlations, and box plots. The authors identified barriers in the cement production process, finding that the most significant factor was the qualifications of the people involved. The authors examined the components of cement that most determine its quality. Their analysis of the barriers in the cement production process revealed that the most critical elements are the individuals involved and their qualifications. Subsequent years saw continued research on this topic by other scientists [73–82].

Further scientific papers [28–39] in this Special Issue concerned medical and pharmaceutical topics. Lipophilicity is one of the most important physicochemical properties of biologically active compounds affecting their biological activity. Lipophilicity allows us to predict absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion, i.e., the behavior of a drug in the patient's body after administration. Klimoszek and Pyka-Pająk [28] studied the lipophilicity of fumaric and maleic acids in an n-octanol-water system using a traditional method and thin-layer partition chromatography (RP-TLC). Experimental partition coefficients (logPexp) were equal to -0.65 and 0.63 for MA and FA, respectively. Chromatographic lipophilicity was determined on various chromatographic plates (RP8F254s,

RP18WF254, and CNF254s). Topological indices derived from distance matrices allowed for the development of a new method for the evaluation of the lipophilicity of MA and FA. All methods applied in this work indicate that MA is less lipophilic than FA. The methods used in this work to determine lipophilicity are of particular importance in the aspect of studying cis- and trans-configuration compounds, because generally available computer programs based on various algorithms (Virtual Computational Chemistry Laboratory and Molinspiration Cheminformatics) indicate that fumaric acid and maleic acid have identical logP values [28].

Betulin exhibits anticancer and anti-inflammatory properties. Lubczyńska et al. [29] studied how betulin and its selected alkynyl derivatives promote changes in the expression of genes associated with inflammation in colon cancer cells. They tested cytotoxicity using the sulforhodamine B test and tested lipophilicity using thin-layer partition chromatography (RP-TLC). Gene expression profiling in adenocarcinoma cells was performed using oligonucleotide microarrays. These studies revealed that betulin and its derivatives influence changes in the expression profiles of genes associated with inflammatory processes in colon adenocarcinoma cell lines. The authors emphasize the need for further research on betulin and the chemical modification of its derivatives.

The TLC method combined with densitometry was developed for the simultaneous determination of sertraline and fluoxetine in pharmaceutical preparations [30]. Solutions of sertraline and fluoxetine were subjected to accelerated aging. Using these solutions, chromatographic conditions were developed (chromatographic plates—silica gel $60F_{254}$ and mobile phase acetone + chloroform + ammonia, 10:5:1, v/v) allowing for the separation of as many degradation products of sertraline and fluoxetine as possible. The R_F values of sertraline and fluoxetine differ from those of fluoxetine and sertraline degradation products. The developed method was simple, economical, specific, precise, accurate, sensitive, and reliable, with a wide linearity range, for the quantitative determination of fluoxetine and sertraline in pharmaceutical preparations.

Ketoconazole has a number of adverse effects when used topically. When administered orally in tablets, its bioavailability is low due to poor water solubility. For this reason, the authors proposed ketoconazole derivatives that also have antifungal properties, which they then incorporated into β-cyclodextrin complexes to achieve optimal bioavailability and physicochemical stability of the proposed drugs [31]. Other studies [32] indicate that the use of albumin as a biopolymer, which is characterized by biodegradability and bioavailability, in combination with chlorambucil can be used for a controlled drug delivery system. Bădiceanu [33] synthesized a series of phthalimide derivatives and determined the structure of the obtained compounds using nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) and infrared (IR) spectra. All the obtained compounds exhibited antioxidant activity, which was determined using the DPPH method.

Rahhal et al. [34] assessed lung function parameters in detergent factory workers and a control group, i.e., workers who do not work with chemical reagents. To this end, spirometry tests were performed, and forced expiratory volume in the first second (FEV1), forced vital capacity (FVC), FEV1/FVC ratio and peak expiratory flow (PEF) were recorded. The study showed that detergent factory workers have significantly lower lung function compared to workers in other occupations not involving chemical reagents. Lipka-Trawińska et al. [35] developed an objective assessment of the skin before and after IPL (Intense Pulsed Light) treatments. They evaluated patients with erythematous lesions, vascular skin, and/or acne. Cross-polarized light image analysis allows for effective visualization of vascular lesions on the face. They demonstrated the usefulness of GLCM and QTDECOMP algorithms for quantitative analysis of vascular lesions on the facial skin. One of the most common dermatological diseases is psoriasis. Odrzywołek et al. [36] compared psoriatic

skin to healthy skin using non-invasive imaging methods. They demonstrated that skin density, epidermal thickness, blood supply, temperature, and reflectance coefficient are useful parameters for monitoring psoriasis and its treatment. In another study, the same authors evaluated the effectiveness of an Nd:YAG laser in reducing psoriatic lesions [37]. The psoriatic lesions of the study participants were imaged using a DUB SkinScanner ultrasound device. Additional skin parameters assessed included stratum corneum hydration and levels of melanin and hemoglobin. The study found that laser therapy contributes to reducing psoriatic lesions, increasing skin density, decreasing epidermal thickness, improving epidermal hydration, and decreasing hemoglobin concentration, which indicates a reduction in inflammation. Paul-Samojedny et al. [38] investigated the efficacy of combining celastrol with the silencing of miR-9-2, miR-17, and miR-19 gene expression in the U251MG human glioblastoma cell line. Their studies revealed significant reductions in cell viability and proliferation, as well as an accumulation of cells in the subG1 phase and a decrease in the cell population in the S and G2/M phases. They also observed the induction of apoptosis and autophagy. Endometriosis is a common chronic inflammatory disease associated with disorders of the female immune system. Smycz-Kubańska et al. [39] evaluated the chemokine and fractalkine content in the peritoneal fluid of women with and without endometriosis. They observed a statistically significant increase in the concentration of MIP-1β, eotaxin 2, eotaxin 3, ENA-78, and fractalkine, as well as a decrease in the concentration of MCP-1, MCP-2, MCP-3, MCP-4, and MIP-1α, compared to the reference group. The concentration of these cytokines also depended on the stage of the disease. The importance of works published in Special Issues on medical and pharmaceutical research is indicated by manuscripts published in subsequent years by other scientists [83–114].

Determining the presence of metals in herbs and spices is crucial for protecting consumer health, as heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and arsenic can accumulate in the body and lead to poisoning and organ damage. Fisher and Brodziak-Dopierała [40] examined selected spices, including peppermint *(Mentha piperita*), basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), lovage (*Levisticum officinale*), and parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*), from their own cultivation and from ready-made commercial products. They determined the mercury concentration in these herbs. The Hg content of the tested spice samples ranged from 1.20 to 17.35 μg/kg, averaging 6.95 μg Hg/kg. Peppermint had the highest Hg concentration, at 9.39 μg/kg. The Hg concentration in home-grown plants was statistically significantly higher than in commercial products purchased in stores. Subsequently, other scientists [115–117] also described the problem of metal contamination of herbs.

Two review articles have been published in a Special Issue. The first [41] discusses the underestimation of articular cartilage in forensic science and medicine. It can be used to estimate the age of the deceased and is an excellent material for postmortem DNA isolation and identification. However, the role of cartilage in detecting toxic substances that are the main or indirect cause of death is still not well understood.

Hoshin Kanri is a process control method originating from Japan that is used by corporations and large companies. The second review paper [42] describes the Hoshin Kanri process and its practical implementations in various sectors. Successful implementations of Hoshin Kanri have been observed mainly in manufacturing and IT organizations, as well as in other sectors such as healthcare and education. Implementing Hoshin Kanri successfully improves market position and achieves leadership. Other reasons include achieving company goals and increasing annual turnover.

I strongly encourage all scientists to read the publications included in this Special Issue of Processes on "10th Anniversary of *Processes*: Women's Special Issue Series".

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