

THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL PUBLISHING

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This editorial is the last one in a year which ends the singularity of our country, and hopefully the new year will bring us all closer to the European Community, as Romania joins the EU. This is good news, because we will strive to be more efficient and more competitive in the field of medical publishing, in which the older European Union countries are well established.

I will try to explore two ideas regarding the future of medical publishing in our country. One is related to the issue of printing and costs of printing and the other one is related to the possible evolution of our journal.

But how will the evolution of medical printing be in the future? Except the normal, almost old-fashioned paper printing, there is also another side of possible evolution for medical publishing. For more than two hundred years publishers, especially in the medical field, charged subscribers for accessing the newest and needed information, to make a profit. Authors have been required to grant copyright ownership to the publisher. This system was not questioned until the Internet popularized the electronic publishing. The Internet, through its fast development, allows rapid dissemination of different types of information to millions of readers. The electronic publishing was born.

The fees have to be affordable for anyone, because otherwise the access to information will be hampered. If the fees are high, the most affected will be the students, young researchers and the teachers from developing countries. The open online access for professionals is a debated subject in the last few years, because, if applied, it may change the way the information is stored, delivered or retrieved.

The electronic publishing offers rapid global access and low costs, and for us it would mean more than we can expect, it would mean new opening for researchers and teachers.

But someone has to pay because it is not for free. If it seems to us that we are getting something for free, it is because the costs are being hidden somewhere else. Would this form be for us a more simple way to get information? Can we access more easier the information? My personal view is that, yes. Even if there are costs related to getting the information from journals with higher impact factor, it is worth it. Our University is struggling to get for its members this kind of access, and e-publishing will be the future of medical journal publishing.

Our journal, Timisoara Medical Journal (TMJ), after 50 years of presence and continuous publication in the medical field, has reached a well established place between other Romanian medical journals. We are also between the first Romanian medical journals which implemented electronic publishing, so you can easily access the articles from the TMJ website. In the struggle to have more viewers and readers we provide free access to the online version.

There would be another matter: the struggle to increase the quality of the published material. In the researcher area the question "to be or not to be" is translated in „to publish or not to publish". Each of us is wanting to publish his or her research in journals with high impact factor. But journals like TMJ are great opportunities to learn researchers to be peer reviewed and to learn to publish in the international medical language – English.

So TMJ evolved after 50 years to a journal which has all the necessary means to become in the near future a journal of high impact factor. This we can achieve only with the help of our readers, coworkers, and especially our medical researchers, but also with the support of the whole medical community.

So, hopefully, the future will be brighter for us after joining the EU, and more and more researchers will access our TMJ and publish in it.

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Received for publication: Dec. 23, 2006.