

# 10 Years of Stomatology Edu Journal



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Editorial

Dear Readers,

When I was asked to help to set up a new Journal with the idea to give Romanian Dentists an international platform to publish in English and allow them easy access to publications of by international researchers, I spontaneously said spontaneously "YES", because this sounded like my mentor, Hans-Rudolf Mühlemann, who did the same many years ago with Helvetica Acta Odontologica and some years later with Swissdent. However, the times had changed with worldwide accessibility to information through the internet. Furthermore, the publishing world has dramatically changed in the last 20 years. Once upon a time, respected scientific journals were strictly peer reviewed. The idea behind this is to publish solid research data. Andreas Lindhe once said: "Nothing is scientifically "shown" or "proven" before it has been published in a scientific journal with a peer review system". The result of this approach is that one can critically judge what was done, how it was done and evaluate how solid it is. This gives the reader confidence that publishing authors would disseminate their knowledge to the benefit of their readers. In this world the consumer of information (the reader, or the university) must pay for it via subscriptions in order to finance publishers for the process of publishing.

Over the years different shifts have happened: the impact factor (IF) has been created with the idea of having a quality measure of journals using the number of citations as a parameter. Later this had been used as well to measure the authors' productivity of authors, "counting" only papers published in IF-journals, for promotion or with job applications; the next step was, that IF was used for allocating research money to departments, with the result that almost all researchers wanted to publish in IF journals exclusively. When we started the Journal of Adhesive Dentistry in 1999, we could painfully feel this trend painfully. It was very difficult to find authors willing to contribute to a new journal without IF.

But since then, more things have happened that dramatically changed the publishing world. The view that knowledge is a common good and should be accessible to everybody got strong and stronger and is reflected in the Budapest Open Access (OA) Initiative by the Open Society Institute 2002 ([www.budapestopeninitiative.org](http://www.budapestopeninitiative.org)) and the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities. Max Planck Society Berlin 2003 ([www.openaccess.mpg.de](http://www.openaccess.mpg.de)). This has created a reversal in the business structure in the publication world. Since in this world nothing is for free, someone had to pay for the publication costs. So now it was the authors rather than the readers that had to pay for the publishing expenses. Parallel to this the requirements for promotion and qualifying for top positions, such as Department Chairs had increased, "publish or perish" became even more dominant as than in the past. When publishers saw this as a great opportunity for making money, the system got perverted. A plethora of open access journal emerged, with some excellent journals, but the majority of them did not have high quality publications in mind; high quantity submissions and thus high volume of money would better characterize this trend. better. They targeted the academic world with the promise of peer reviewed very fast publication by reducing the "review" process to extremely short periods and were not shy of any thinkable thinking able sins of the publishing process. Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado was the first to note that the quality of articles published in many OA journals is low, that peer review in many OA journals is negligible or non-existent, that public access to poor-quality articles harms the public, and that the careers of young scholars who publish in poor-quality OA journals are harmed. Based on his findings the term predatory journals and a Bealls list ([www.beallslist.net](http://www.beallslist.net)) werewas created.

Then the world was confronted with the Bohannon experiment (Bohannon J. Who's afraid of peer review? [www.Sciencemag.org](http://www.Sciencemag.org). Science 4 October 2013 Vol. 342 no. 6154 pp. 60-65. DOI: 10.1126/science.342.6154.60) Bohannon, a Harvard cancer researcher, had created 304 fake papers "The Paper took this form: Molecule X from lichen species Y inhibits the growth of cancer cell Z. To substitute those variables, I created a database of molecules, lichens, and cancer cell lines and wrote a computer program to generate hundreds of unique papers. Other than those differences, the scientific content of each paper is identical". All of them contained such grave errors that a competent peer reviewer should easily identify it as flawed and unpublishable. He created fictious authors and institutions. Furthermore, to camouflage his good English, he had Google translate it into French and then back into English, based on a recommendation of some Harvard molecular biologists colleagues which who had mock- reviewed the paper.

John Bohannon then submitted the papers 10/week and waited for what was going to happen. I quote here Bohannon's original Science article: "By the time Science went to press, 157 of the journals had accepted the paper and 98 had rejected it. Of the remaining 49 journals, 29 seem to be derelict: websites abandoned by their creators. Editors from the other 20 had e-mailed the fictitious corresponding authors stating that the paper was still under review; those, too, are excluded from this analysis. Acceptance took 40 days on average, compared to 24 days to elicit a rejection. Of the 255 papers that underwent the entire editing process to acceptance or rejection, about 60% of the final decisions occurred with no sign of peer review. For rejections, that's good news: It means that the journal's quality control was high enough that the editor examined the paper and declined it rather than send it out for review. But for acceptances, it likely means that the paper was rubber-stamped without being read by anyone. Of the 106 journals that discernibly performed any review, 70% ultimately accepted the paper. Most reviews focused exclusively on the paper's layout, formatting, and language. This sting did not waste the time of many legitimate peer reviewers. Only 36 of the 304 submissions generated review comments recognizing any of the paper's scientific problems. And 16 of those papers were accepted by the editors despite the damning into reviews"

In 2018 there was another "Fake Science" scandal. An international group of journalists analyzed 175,000 scientific papers published by 5 of the most pseudoscientific platforms. They had successfully published nonscientific papers in the most pseudoscientific platforms and even had successfully published computer generated (SCIGN = a computer program that randomly generates academic computer science papers using context-free grammar) papers.

As an interesting side effect, they found that employees of pharma companies were using pseudoscientific platforms to publish data. ([www.dw.com/en/germany-sees-sharp-rise-in-fake-science-journal-publication-report/a-44742014](http://www.dw.com/en/germany-sees-sharp-rise-in-fake-science-journal-publication-report/a-44742014))

Summing up these developments in the publishing world, it is a catastrophe for science. A comment from The Guardian sums it up perfectly: "You simply don't know if the studies which are published with open access journals are good, worthless, or bad, because you cannot be sure if and what kind of editorial process or peer review process takes place there. That is the problem with the predatory journals in the end: eroding the trust in science. A slowly creeping poison. Something may look like a study but may not be worth the paper it is written on". ([www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/aug/10/predatory-publishers-the-journals-who-churn-out-fake-science](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/aug/10/predatory-publishers-the-journals-who-churn-out-fake-science))

Dear Readers, in the above mentioned world Stomatology Edu Journal survived for 10 years and is still alive! Congratulations! This was possible, because the management team decided to stick to rigorous peer review, which was well structured and made transparent by using the Manuscript Manager program ([andy@manuscriptmanager.com](mailto:andy@manuscriptmanager.com)). Stomatology Edu Journal's listing with the Romanian Academy of Science necessitated a print edition. This requirement, combined with the journal's open-access policy without publication fees, introduced new financial considerations. As the journal evolved, my role transitioned from Editor to that of a supportive colleague.

I am wishing to the team that currently runs the Stomatology Edu Journal all the best for the future and I am looking forward to writing the next anniversary editorial in 10 years.

Sincerely yours,

J-F ROULET 

Founding Editor-in-Chief  
Stomatology Edu Journal