

The obstacles in planning and launching a new scientific journal

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Why another scientific journal? One may ask this question when browsing the Internet and encountering the homepage of the Archives of Exercise in Health and Disease (AEHD). Searching the relevant databases provides information on the incredibly large and growing number of scientific journals and articles published over the past decades. While just 30 years ago researchers had to choose among three or four journals that might be suited for publication of their results, a minor but decisive point during the preparation of a manuscript nowadays consists of discussions among the involved authors, whether this or that journal, more related to basic research or to applied sciences, should be the best forum to disseminate their results and considerations successfully.

How to assess the quality of a journal?

To what degree a journal is acknowledged, although too simplistic in my opinion, frequently is judged by the impact factor. This is a point sometimes considered that is like looking at a “golden calf,” especially by a scientist during a decisive phase of his/her career. It is well known that the impact factor can be manipulated in several ways, e.g., when the Editor encourages potential authors to cite relevant references frequently or even tends to reject manuscripts if this has not been fulfilled adequately.

The quality of a journal should be based on the following points:

- Original papers with innovative characters
- Reviews that give a coherent overview at the state of the art
- The opportunity to discuss controversial points in Letters to the Editor with the opportunity of rebuttal or extension of arguments

Such material should be of interest for the readers, not just a publication of data because they have been produced in a laboratory and do not want to die in a drawer.

The mission statement of AEHD

This new journal is aimed at publishing material as stated in the foregoing section. The AEHD wants to contribute to an improvement of knowledge about the advantages and potential disadvantages of exercise, acute or chronic, in health and disease of humans, as well as in animals if experiments have not been performed yet in humans, maybe for ethical reasons. The AEHD, in this sense, appears as a multidisciplinary journal that has identified the link between basic research and the application of this research to the benefit of humans in the broad area of exercise physiology.

Assembling an Editorial Board and peer reviewers

Anyone who has been working responsibly for a scientific journal is aware of the fact that many of his or her colleagues are not available to perform reviews or to serve as members on the editorial board, simply because they have too much higher priority work on their desks and such work is not paid. Both the Director and Editor of the AEHD are linked via their outstanding positions in the Center of Investigation on Physical Activity, Health and Leisure, to many colleagues in other European countries and the USA. Therefore, they were able to assemble an Editorial Board with members from seven European countries and three countries overseas. This, together with a reasonable number of peer reviewers who are willing to invest their expertise actively to the benefit of the journal, should guarantee the publication of papers of

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the highest quality. It might be superfluous in the present electronic era but should be mentioned that the utilization of electronic media and the Internet facilitates the handling of manuscripts.

Why should one publish in a new journal?

As a matter of fact, a new journal does not have an impact factor yet and starts its first two-to-three years under the observation and assessment of the Institute of Scientific Information. Some journals never get indexed and therefore never reach any position in the listings with impact factors. This might be a hindrance for some authors to submit their materials to a journal

under recent development and therefore, the manuscript flow towards a new journal may be not very large in the initial phase. The benefit, on the other hand, could be the chance to get the manuscript quickly published once it has been accepted. Many researchers, especially young researchers, depend on composing a reasonable list of international publications in peer reviewed journals to get promoted in their careers. In this sense, I should like to invite many colleagues working in the field with which the AEHD covers to submit their materials. Some years later they might look back and be pleased to have contributed to the first volumes of a well-acknowledged journal.