

What comes next?

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Although it is now February, as this is the first issue of 2019, it behoves me to think about my New Year resolutions for IJPP, and enlist your help in making them come to fruition.

We have ambitious plans for the next year with the mutually beneficial objective of promoting good research, improving patient care, and of course ensuring the success of the Journal. I would like to share some of these ideas with you and encourage you to support them.

First of all 2019 will see the publication of a Special Issue on the care of the elderly which is being Guest Edited by my colleague Professor Carmel Hughes. I'm delighted to have her support and expertise. Given the rapidly ageing population in much of the world, and the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases, there has never been a more important time to think about the challenges of multimorbidity, polypharmacy, and medicines optimisation. I am sure many people are working in this field so please submit your research on this topic and make this a really influential special issue.

Another of our plans, for the forthcoming year, is to launch an occasional series of research masterclasses highlighting new leading edge methodologies to enhance our research and commissioned horizon scanning editorials. Whilst we have plenty of ideas, please do suggest topics of interest and ideas from your own particular areas of expertise for this series. Please let us know and we will consider them in the context of other papers in the pipeline.

It is in our mutual interest as authors and editors for research papers to reach the right audience, to add to the body of evidence on a particular topic, and ultimately to improve health outcomes for patients. This means increasing readership and citations but also using dissemination approaches beyond traditional academic publishing, tailored to different readerships. Early in the New Year we will be sharing with authors a new multichannel campaign on ways to promote research papers. Authors will be sent a unique link to a read only version of their article which they can share with anyone anywhere, and given tips to promote their research.

I would also like to share with authors and reviewers resources to promote good publications. Firstly I would remind you of the EQUATOR (Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency Of health Research) network (<http://www.equator-network.org/>), which I have mentioned before, and which is an online repository of guidelines and checklists for reporting many different study designs. Perhaps the most well-known of these would be the CONSORT and PRISMA guidelines for randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews respectively, but there are many others for a whole range of research approaches and methodologies. Using these guidelines at both the protocol writing and reporting stage is highly recommended as a way of ensuring all the key elements of a research study are covered at the planning as well as the writing stage, ultimately facilitating acceptance of your article for publication and avoiding disappointment further down the line. Whilst it seems ethically wrong not to publish research and allow others to benefit from your findings, which are often funded from public or charitable money, it is also ethically wrong to publish a flawed paper or fraudulent paper whose findings could be used as building blocks for another study, included in a systematic review or even used to influence policy. It is therefore incumbent on everyone to do the best research they can and publish it.

So finally this leads me to remind you about the COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) website (<https://publicationethics.org/>), which is a useful resource for authors as well as editors on all aspects of ethical publishing. It gives advice on many of the issues which can come to haunt even the most experienced authors and researchers such as checking who qualifies to be an author on a paper, and understand how to manage author disputes. It includes a link to the international standards for authors agreed at the second World Conference on Research Integrity held in 2010, which include the following (1):

- The research being reported should have been conducted in an ethical and responsible manner and should comply with all relevant legislation.
- Researchers should present their results clearly, honestly, and without fabrication, falsification or inappropriate data manipulation.
- Researchers should strive to describe their methods clearly and unambiguously so that their findings can be confirmed by others.
- Researchers should adhere to publication requirements that submitted work is original, is not plagiarised, and has not been published elsewhere.
- Authors should take collective responsibility for submitted and published work.
- The authorship of research publications should accurately reflect individuals' contributions to the work and its reporting.
- Funding sources and relevant conflicts of interest should be disclosed

So what does come next? We look forward to another year of exciting high quality well conducted ethical research. Safe, efficient and effective use of medicines has never been more important, preventive rather than curative approaches never more needed, committed and well educated professionals never more in demand, but we need the evidence to understand how to best deliver on all of these, and more.

References:

1. Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, Singapore, July 22-24, 2010. Chapter 50 in: Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore (pp 309-16). (ISBN 978-981-4340-97-7)