

# Welcome Editorial

Today's issue of Swiss Medical Weekly reflects changes in the journal that have been discussed by the Editorial Board and prepared for over a number of years. In recent decades we have noted with regret how economic necessity has forced compromises which have steadily eroded the journal's attraction for authors as a vehicle for important original observations. It has had to carry many continuous education articles for our local medical communities and meet the subscribers' wish to read them in their French and German mother tongues – articles rarely quoted and thus diluting our impact factor.

The tradition of more than 125 years of publishing original and highly important observations has been undermined by other factors beyond our control. The absolute dominance of the English language in biomedical publications – think of phrases such as “review of the English-language literature” rather than “the pertinent literature” – has become an inescapable fact. The almost unquestionable reliability of articles published in prestigious journals with a high impact factor (in the eyes of evaluators of academic careers, funding agencies, and last but not least the marketing departments of pharmaceutical companies) has put a premium on the judgement of scientific work. The author will want these benefits whenever he considers it to his advantage – and we are the last to blame him. Furthermore, the dominant journals are quoted first by authors seeking credibility from the literature they cite, and also keen to win the goodwill of the editorial boards and potential referees associated with such journals and funding agencies. The effect of the impact factor on the decision of an author to submit a report to a particular journal is undeniable, and as journal editors we are well aware of it.

What, then, have we done to force change, and how was this possible after all these years of apparently fruitless discussion? Most importantly, the publishing house, official editor of the Swiss Medical Association, decided to reorganise Swiss Medical Weekly as an economically autonomous platform independent of subscriptions and advertising income. Also, the reform would allow a complete switch to English as the language of publication. Despite stringent financial limitations we are opening our journal full text at no charge via Internet ([www.smw.ch](http://www.smw.ch)) to a worldwide readership, whose access to it will be facilitated in the near future by a simple button click through Medline.

We have reformed our review process, speeding it up through entirely electronic communication between authors, editors, international referees, and printer. To improve the quality of the review process each manuscript including or war-

ranting statistical analysis is seen by our statistician. Language is also a prime concern, and we have staffed the editorial office accordingly. Print quality will maintain standards, including high quality colour prints at no extra charge. Like other journals we will focus extra effort on articles demanding more expeditious publication, by rapid processing on reasoned request.

By limiting our scope to medical science we will avoid dilution of our impact factor by continuous education articles in national languages. Continuous education will be published in a new and structured national platform, the Swiss Medical Forum.

We are confident that with these changes we shall attain our ultimate goal of becoming an attractive continental European platform for medical sciences – attractive to authors from Europe and the rest of the world, and attractive through content geared to a broad, clinically oriented readership regardless of speciality and interests.

We will do our utmost to live up to our new logo, combining the symbols of medicine and a tradition of quality in the service of the biomedical community. It is up to readers and authors to decide whether we have succeeded in what we embark on today, after thorough preparation and with widespread support.

*The Editorial Board  
of the Swiss Medical Weekly:*  
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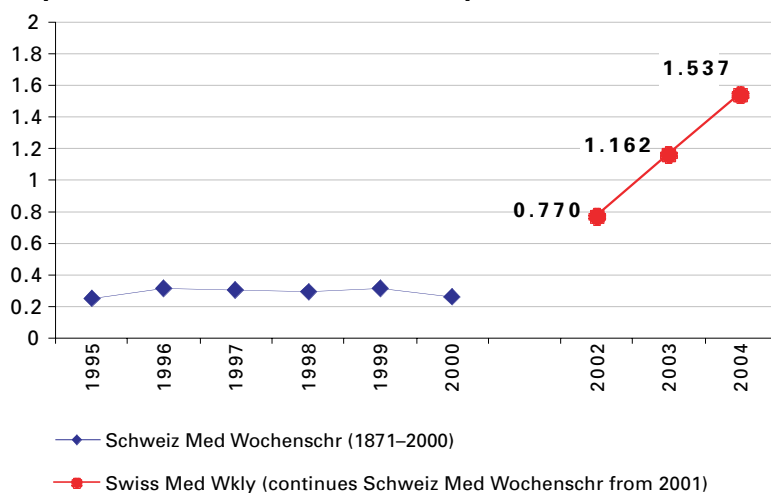
We evaluate manuscripts of broad clinical interest from all specialities, including experimental medicine and clinical investigation.

We look forward to receiving your paper!

Guidelines for authors:

[http://www.smw.ch/set\\_authors.html](http://www.smw.ch/set_authors.html)

### Impact factor Swiss Medical Weekly



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