

Happy New Year to all of you – go on keeping the boat in the water, and the water out of the boat, in 2007!

The Editorial Board of Swiss Medical Weekly wishes you every success in following this imperative precept of all sailors in 2007. SMW can look back on a highly satisfactory past year thanks to the efforts of all of you – authors, referees and readers. We are particularly grateful to our expert referees who are listed on page 35 of this issue.

The number of submissions has risen and the editors have a wider choice from which to select articles of interest. Submissions have become more intercontinental this year, with manuscripts reaching us from the Far East, Africa and the Middle East. It was, and is, our goal to be a scientific platform for scientists in all the countries of Europe and the world. We reward authors by offering open access publication, which we shall continue to do in the coming year, making the SMW accessible to a worldwide readership through the Internet at no cost.

To produce a scientific journal involves costs that cannot be borne by subscribers alone. Page charges are not the practice in general medical journals and the SMW Editorial Board opposes the idea of instituting a charge of this kind for future authors. Advertising revenues are a major contributing factor in defraying the publishers' production costs. Readers of print journals accept advertisements and the author of this editorial sometimes even derives useful information from them. Advertisements must be identified as such and doctors are or should be trained to interpret their contents. Open access publication does not generate additional income and may even mean loss of subscribers. To include advertisements in PDF downloads of journal articles comparable to the print version of a journal would only be fair to the print version's subscribers and the publisher,

and would boost the resources needed to produce a high quality journal. New laws are now threatening such forms of financial support for journals in Switzerland and other European countries. They would require access control to advertising in the Internet, granting admission to professionals only and shutting out lay persons. Such a closed access policy is contrary to the philosophy of the Internet and the free exchange of information. Swissmedic, the Swiss counterpart of the FDA in the US, is preparing to impose rules of this kind despite the difficulty it already has in performing its ordinary tasks [1, 2]. It is doubtful whether the people behind this closed access policy realise that, with the Internet, only the medium has changed, not the message. SMW in its print version is accessible to everyone in public libraries. It is hypocrisy for a drug regulating agency to deny access to information through the Web and at the same time to lack the power to prevent illegal procurement of addictive drugs via the Web.

Open access has been part of this journal's success since its transition to a scientific general medical journal [3], and the change from a multi-language to an English-language-only journal [4] was merely a logical consequence of our transition from the SMW's previously national scope to that of an international scientific journal focusing on all aspects of clinical medicine.

We hope to hear from all of you soon, will do our best to improve the quality of your manuscripts and continue to ensure worldwide access for them via the Internet.

*Andreas Schaffner, M.D.
Editor-in-Chief SMW*

References

- 1 http://search.parlament.ch/cv-geschaefte?gesch_id=20063041.
- 2 <http://bildung.tagesanzeiger.ch/dyn/news/schweiz/678309.html>.
- 3 Schaffner A. Journal impact factors depend on more than just publication language. *Swiss Med Wkly*. 2006;136(27-28): 411-2.
- 4 Mueller PS, et al. The association between impact factors and language of general internal medicine journals. *Swiss Med Wkly*. 2006;136(27-28):441-3.

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We look forward to receiving your paper!

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