



## Our Association's Journal

For those keeping track, the world of medical/scientific publishing is in the middle of some pretty significant disruption.<sup>1</sup> Transformations in this complex (and often frustratingly opaque) ecosystem is driven by the constantly growing number of journals being launched and subsequent rise in manuscripts published. As peer-reviewed publications are a metric of scientific competence, the temptation to prioritize quantity over quality — raising concerns about plagiarism and the dilution of scientific rigor — is a very real problem.

Many forces are at play: our unfortunate academic “publish or perish” paradigm, funding mandates for grant recipients fueling the acceleration of open-access publishing, pre-print servers and their ill-defined place, challenges with transparent and effective peer review,<sup>2</sup> and the emergence of artificial intelligence tools have all collided to exacerbate long-standing issues ensuring quality of our research output. Perhaps these foment increased skepticism or mistrust of science in general.

Historically, academic journals emerged from the desire of learned societies to carve out a space where specialized communities could share insights and advance their fields. These publications served as a platform for society members to articulate their unique perspectives and address subspecialized areas of study; however, the landscape shifted markedly after the early part of the last century, when publishing became a more profitable enterprise. This shift in economic reality prompted a gradual reorientation of their focus. No longer just the voice of scholarly societies, many journals began to prioritize commercial success, sometimes at the expense of the community-focused dialogue that had originally defined their purpose. This transformation has sparked ongoing debate about the role and integrity of academic publishing in maintaining the original mission of these scholarly communities. Do medical journals need to be aligned with medical associations anymore?

In our view, the relationship between societies and their journals can be symbiotic and, arguably, essential in this current environment. The *Canadian Urological Association Journal (CUAJ)* is, of course, published by the Canadian Urological Association

(CUA), with its first issue released in March 2007. Most loyal readers will likely be unaware that *CUAJ* is a “diamond” open-access journal; the contents of the journal are accessible to anyone with internet access and authors are not charged a fee to publish. The costs of publication, underwritten by our association with an attentive balance of costs and advertising revenue, allow us the prioritization of scholarly integrity and availability over profit.

The publication of guidelines and other original research with a Canadian context delivers on the CUA's mission to support its membership and advance urologic care in our country. Many association journals, even in today's environment, can lead to some revenue that supports other initiatives critical to their mission. Although it is important to ensure a degree of separation between journal editorial policies from other potentially competing mandates of a medical association, this marriage might be key to ensuring the future of scientific communication.<sup>3</sup>

As we move forward with the challenges the industry is facing, the necessity for learned societies to be actively involved in the publishing ecosystem becomes clear. Associations like the CUA are uniquely positioned to foster scholarly communication that is both high in quality and aligned with the ethical standards necessary for scientific advancement. Through their journals, societies can play a collaborative role to ensure that research shared with the community is not only innovative but also conducted and reported responsibly. This involvement is crucial not only for advancing medical knowledge and patient care but also for supporting the organization's broader goals of member education and advocacy.

### REFERENCES

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