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JOURNAL PROMOTION

The development of high impact national and regional journals in medicine and the health sciences

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Abstract: The international academic journal publishing landscape is complex and in continuous flux. Many Russian editors and publishers wish to bring their journals into the global mainstream and to develop internationally competitive profiles for their work. Bibliometric citation systems are one means by which the quality of journals, of articles and researchers, can be assessed, referenced and compared. Scopus and the Web of Science are two major and respected quality assurance systems for global publishing, within which many academic journals seek formal listings. These listings help develop a wider international profile for any journal. They also provide valuable data through which journals can benchmark their performance against all other journals in any subject field. In turn, this information helps to stimulate competition and quality improvement across the entire academic journal ecosystem.

Scopus provides a transparent and continually evolving evaluation and feedback system for journals seeking a listing and those journals that have already been listed within Scopus. An application for a Scopus listing is a process through which a journal is evaluated by several quantitative and qualitative criteria against global benchmarks. A successful listing can sometimes require a series of strategic insights and developments by editors and publishers over several years.

In this article, Dr David Rew, a practising clinician and the Subject Chair for Medicine to the Scopus Content Selection Advisory Board since 2009, distils the experience of evaluation of more than 2000 Medical and Health Sciences journals to guide as to what features and strategies give academic journals a better chance of long term success in the competitive world of global academic publishing.

Keywords: academic/scholarly journals, Medicine, Health Sciences, expertise, evaluation, selection, indexing, international scientometric databases, citation indexes, Scopus, CSAB

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ПРОДВИЖЕНИЕ ЖУРНАЛОВ

Создание высокорейтинговых национальных и региональных журналов по медицине и наукам о здоровье

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Резюме: Международные научные журналы существуют в крайне сложной среде, где условия, выдвигаемые для публикаций, все время меняются. Многие российские редакторы и издатели, тем не

менее, желают включить свои журналы в пул международно признанных изданий и разработать конкурентоспособные форматы представления своих статей на мировой научной арене. Библиометрические системы цитирования как раз являются одним из доступных средств, с помощью которого можно оценивать качество журналов и представленных в них статей, а также сравнивать их друг с другом и ссылаться на них. Scopus и Web of Science – две главные и наиболее престижные базы данных, гарантирующие качественный уровень публикации, потому и многие научные журналы стремятся попасть в перечень изданий, индексируемых в этих системах. Присутствие журнала в данных перечнях способствует расширению международной узнаваемости любого журнала, а также предоставляет доступ к данным, с помощью которых журналы могут сравнивать свою эффективность с другими журналами в любой предметной области. Эта информация, в свою очередь, помогает стимулировать конкуренцию и улучшать качество всей «экосистемы», в которой существуют научные издания.

База данных Scopus обеспечивает прозрачную и постоянно развивающуюся систему оценивания, а также гарантирует обратную связь как тем журналам, которые только стремятся попасть в ее перечень индексируемых изданий, так и тем, которые в него уже включены. В процессе подачи заявки на индексацию в базе данных Scopus журнал оценивается по ряду количественных и качественных критериев, являющихся международными стандартами качества, и для успешного прохождения этой стадии редакторам и издателям бывает необходимо принять целую серию стратегических решений по развитию журнала, что может привести к должному результату через несколько лет.

В настоящей статье д-р Дэвид Рю, практикующий врач и с 2009 г. являющийся экспертом по медицине в Экспертном совете по отбору контента в Scopus (*Content Selection and Advisory Board*), обобщает опыт оценки более двух тысяч журналов по медицине и наукам о здоровье, чтобы дать рекомендации относительно того, какие стратегии приводят научные журналы к долгосрочному успеху в конкурентном мире глобальных научных публикаций.

Ключевые слова: научные журналы, медицина, здравоохранение, экспертная оценка, отбор, индексирование, международные наукометрические базы данных, индексы цитирования, экспертный совет, Scopus, CSAB

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Introduction

Academic publishing is a complex and evolving subject, which is founded in the principles of the *Journal des Sçavans* (Paris, January 1665), and by the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (London, March 1665). An academic journal is a periodic and permanent document of record, for public use and examination. It is a key element in the communication of the objective knowledge which has developed exponentially and spread globally in the past four centuries of human existence.

The printing press transformed communication following its invention by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1440s. The Internet has similarly transformed many forms of human interaction over the past 30 years, including

academic publishing. The twentieth century saw a substantial growth in the number and range of academic journals in many countries. Publication in a peer reviewed academic journal carries prestige for the authors. This has led to the complex science of bibliometrics, which seeks to quantify the quality of the published work through the ranking of journals, articles and individual authors. The process developed momentum from 1955 onwards, when Eugene Garfield first articulated the concept of the Science Citation Index [1]. This led to the founding of his Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) in 1964 and the introduction of the mathematically derived Impact Factor in 1975.

Computerisation of journal libraries and reference lists has subsequently led to a

major industry in the collation, organisation, evaluation and analysis of academic journal output, and to the introduction of a wide range of derived measurements (metrics) of journal, author and article performance. All of these measurements individually and collectively have limitations as surrogates and descriptors of real world outputs and performance. They are nevertheless of value to institutions, to funding organisations and to governments as measurements of performance and the Gross Intellectual Output of a University or a Nation. They are also an important tool in assessing and ranking the academic careers of individuals.

As computer systems and data storage and processing functions have become cheaper and more sophisticated, so the capacity of scientific information systems to accept and process more journals and a wider range of content has grown exponentially. Coverage has expanded to include journals in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (A and H) and Law; academic Books and Treatises, Patents and Conference Proceedings, each of which represent wider academic performance than publication in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) journals alone. The ISI created the Web of Knowledge as a repository for the *Science Citation Index* and related *Social Science* and *A and H Indices*. For many years, the data was published and distributed on paper to academic libraries as voluminous Journal Citation Reports, which were progressively computerised.

The Scopus citation system was created in 2005, since when competition has spurred substantial innovation in the fields of academic publication and of academic citation systems. These now divide broadly into the “all-comers” public open access systems such as Google Scholar; and the “quality assured” commercial systems, which include Scopus and the Web of Science.

Surrogates for peer recognition and the wider social impact of academic output now include “altmetrics”. These are measures of public engagement with academic content, which are derived from social media activity.

The evolution of the academic publication landscape

Until the end of the 20th century, the academic publishing landscape was broadly stable. Printed journals were supported by individual, organisational and learned society subscriptions, and print copies were distributed to the academic libraries. There was consequently a high cost barrier to entry for new journals.

From 2000 onwards, the academic publication landscape changed dramatically, in consequence of numerous technological advances, as in:

1. The computerisation of document processing.
2. The growth of the Internet. This transformed the economics of content creation and global distribution in real time, and the costs of becoming a publisher dropped dramatically.
3. Computer hardware and software systems, including cloud computing, which allow the capture and processing of huge quantities of raw data at costs which permit market entry from the smallest of publishers.

Furthermore, the development of Open Access processes transferred the costs of publication from subscribers, institutions and established academic publishers to authors and research funding agencies, while on-line-only publishing virtually eliminated distribution costs for start up publishers.

The Quality Assurance of Academic Journals

In most subject areas, the academic journal remains a key element in the publication process. The reputation of the journal becomes a form of branding for the individual article. Quality Assurance (QA) is the process by which journals are evaluated for a wide range of characteristics. Quality is always difficult to define and measure, and therefore QA processes will often be imperfect. QA is strongly influenced by the editorial structure and peer review process of a Journal. These ensure the trustworthiness of the content for readers and users of that content.

There are various strategies and approaches to develop quality assurance within bibliometric systems. Journal selection for inclusion in the

major bibliometric systems is a key element in this process. Web of Science uses an inhouse evaluation team, while Scopus uses an external advisory board for this purpose.

Quality Assurance and the Scopus Content Selection Advisory Boards

By 2009, Scopus had grown organically to include around 18000 journals. However, *Ulrich's Periodical Directory* then contained around 300,000 listings, and it was estimated that there were some 80,000 journals “out there” in the global academic marketplace which might in due course seek a listing in Scopus. A key driver in the commercial marketplace at that time was for quality assurance of the content of the data systems. This requirement was further driven by the recognition of both Scopus and Web of Science as performance reference systems, such that rightly or wrongly, publication in a Scopus or WoS listed journal had often become a surrogate for academic quality. In turn, academic careers were being made or broken on this somewhat artificial and unsatisfactory criterion.

In the search for a solution to the challenge of understanding which additional applicant journals to include in Scopus from 2009 onwards, and which to defer pending further improvement, Elsevier created a new Scopus Content Selection Advisory Board (CSAB) of external advisers. The Board comprises 15–17 Subject Chair specialists, mainly experienced journal editors, whose initial remit was to develop a systematic, transparent, auditable and reproducible journal evaluation system for journal acceptance or deferment. The resulting system, STEP (the Scopus Title Evaluation Platform), permits evaluation of a combination of qualitative and quantitative factors for each applicant journal.

As experienced editors, the CSAB members were also well aware of malpractices in article publication, which misdemeanours took many forms. In 2011, we therefore also introduced the mandatory requirement that every journal should publish a statement of adherence to best practice in Publication Ethics and the avoidance of Malpractice in article publication,

as a condition of access and retention in Scopus. The principles behind this project are clearly identified in the work of organisations such as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

This experimental policy could not hope to eliminate the more subtle forms of publication practice, but it at least took away from authors, editors and publishers the excuse that they were not aware of the problem and the remedies. Nevertheless, it has proved to be very influential across the academic publishing world, and all journals now formally acknowledge these principles in one form or another.

The Process of Journal Evaluation

The STEP process is clearly set out on the Scopus web site [2], and it is not the purpose of this article to examine it in detail. It combines information provided by the publisher of the applicant journal, with information derived from external sources, including bibliometric data and internet searches.

This can be a complex and challenging process with many variables, and there are no absolute measures of success or failure to secure accession to Scopus at any point in time. Threshold indicators for acceptance include variables such as the quality and quantity of content and evidence of bibliometric activity; editorial and peer review processes; trustworthy governance systems and the probable sustainability of the journal; its relative position in the established ecosystem for its subject area; and in the context of the reputation of the publisher.

There is a range of automated technical systems to evaluate the performance of journals within Scopus and to highlight outliers with a poor or unexpected performance for re-evaluation. Most importantly, Scopus is an international citation system which is intended to be of global utility. Therefore, journals and their publishers are strongly encouraged to publish (as a minimum) an English Language version of the journal website, and the title and the abstract of each article in English. However, to achieve maximum international impact for applicant journals, journals are also encouraged to co-publish their full content in English. This is because English has evolved over

the past century as the global default language of scientific and technical communication [3]. English language translation can, of course, pose major costs on smaller publishers in non-English speaking countries. However, the rapid advance of accurate and efficient automated language translation systems (as evidenced on Wikipedia and Google Translate) should substantially improve immediate translation between all major languages in the near future.

Journal support through the STEP process

Acceptance rates are variable across subject areas, but overall they are of the order of 40–50% on successful progression through the entire STEP system. Of those journals that do not achieve acceptance on the first run through STEP, most have the potential for future accession. Therefore, the STEP process is intended to provide constructive feedback to help journals improve their chances of future acceptance.

The STEP reviewers are encouraged to advise applicant journals on any factors which might strengthen a journal's development and chances of achieving international academic impact. Reviewers can recommend resubmission in 1, 2, 3 or 5 years, once the highlighted issues are addressed, and depending upon the likely amount of time needed to secure meaningful improvements. The "Never Review Again" option for egregiously bad or irrelevant non-scholarly serial publications is rarely exercised.

Developments in Academic Journal Publishing since 2009

The decade since 2009 has seen radical changes in the academic publication landscape, to which Scopus and STEP have been continuously adaptive. In particular:

- the Open Access movement has led to dramatic growth in journals based upon new publication and financing models;
- the dramatic fall in publishing costs has led to an explosion of online publishers;
- some of these publishers have developed publishing practices which have been regarded as questionable and "predatory", where there is clear evidence of the wilful sacrifice of the controls to quality in the pursuit of profit.

These factors have led to an explosion in the number of journals and publishers of all types and publication market models. This, in turn, has increased the challenges for the Scopus STEP reviewers to identify quality in a changing environment which has sometimes seemed like a publishing "Wild West".

The Contribution of the Regional Scopus Content Advisory Boards

The Subject Chairs on the Scopus CSAB have a global overview of the Scopus portfolio of more than 25,000 journals, including some 8000 journals on Medicine and Health subjects. There is no fixed ceiling on the number of journals which can be represented in Scopus and this is not a "zero-sum game". Any journal which has ambitions to expose its content to the international community is welcome to apply. Indeed, Scopus is keen both to expand journal coverage and to support an increase in the quality and success of all academic journals.

In order to achieve these purposes, Scopus has supported the development of regional boards. These are empowered to use local knowledge to raise the international competitiveness of journals in regions which have not previously been integrated in the global academic publishing landscape for reasons of history, language and other national circumstances. Scopus presently supports the evolution of regional representative boards in Russia, China, South Korea and South East Asia under strong and enthusiastic local leadership. The Regional Board leaders also sit on the main Scopus Board at its twice-yearly meetings and contribute actively to the work and direction of the Board.

The Editors and Publishers of regional journals which wish to be listed for inclusion in Scopus are strongly encouraged to work directly through the regional boards and to draw upon the advice and expertise of their representatives.

The Characteristics of Successful Regional Journals

There is no fixed formula for a successful academic journal. Journals have different roles and influence in different subject fields. In

general, the “Big Data” subjects (for example Astronomy, Genomic Biology, Particle Physics) are moving to online repositories, preprints and other open access systems.

Medicine and the Health Sciences (M&HS) broadly retain a conventional journal publishing model for the dissemination of clinical research. M&HS Journals are variously published:

- by individuals, special interest groups and charities;
- by national and international learned societies;
- by local, regional, national and international professional associations;
- by individual institutions, including university faculties, and hospitals;
- by national health agencies and representative bodies;
- by established mainstream commercial publishers in print and online;
- by new model open access and “online only” commercial publishers.

There are various motivations for the publication of an M&HS journal, including:

- the altruistic dissemination of human knowledge in Medicine and the Health Sciences;
- the advancement of professional and institutional reputations;
- the creation of wealth and profit.

In practice, successful journals are sustained on a combination of these factors. Profitability is a key element in the success of any venture, including academic publishing. Without a positive flow of income, whether from charitable or institutional funds, subscriptions, sales or *Article Processing Charges* (APCs), a journal will not be sustainable. All members of editorial teams must therefore be aware of the importance of sustainable finance to the long term success of a journal.

The Content of Medical and Health Sciences Journals

Just as publishing models vary, so do content models, including:

- multidisciplinary content from all subject areas;
- general institutional content from a hospital or University Faculty;

- specialist subject content from any discipline of the Health Sciences;

- super-specialist content from within one discipline of health sciences, for example, Diabetes or Renal Disease from within General Medicine, or Epilepsy from within Neurosciences.

Some of the best known global journals, for example, *Nature Medicine*, *The Lancet* and the *New England Journal of Medicine* are truly multidisciplinary. This is because they can attract the best global content from all subject areas. The reputations of such journals have been developed and sustained over decades or even centuries of publication.

In contrast, many M&HS journals which aim for wide content coverage in order to attract manuscripts are less convincing in their publishing model. If an M&HS journal chooses to be multidisciplinary, then it is very helpful to divide the content into subject matter sections (for example *Cardiology*, *Renal Medicine*) to help the reader and the editors.

In general terms, specialisation of subject matter is desirable in an M&HS journal. It focusses the work of the editorial team on quality submissions from a defined author base. The most effective and successful regional journals will focus their content on the local health challenges and outputs which are unique to the region and its geography. For example, these may relate to the challenges of health care delivery in remote locations; to specific industries, environmental conditions and locally prevalent diseases; and to particular population health issues. This local knowledge and insight give regional journals a Unique Selling Point (USP) and publication advantage in relation to any other journal.

The Choice of Title for a Journal

The choice of Title is fundamental to the long term success of a journal. The more honest, specific and geographically explicit the title, the more convincing will it be. Thus, a journal from a small society or institution which calls itself “*The World Journal of Medicine*” or “*The International Journal of Health*” is unconvincing, other than as a statement of the (probably unrealistic) ambitions of the local editorial board. In contrast, the aims

and purpose of a journal which explicitly states its geographic origins and purpose, for example “*The European Journal of Surgical Oncology*” will be clearly understood by potential authors and readers. The title of the journal is its brand for the outside world, like *Sukhoi Aircraft* or *Faberge Jewellery*. Editorial teams should therefore have confidence and pride in making explicit the national or geographic origins of their journal (for example, “*The Russian Journal of...*”; “*The Siberian Journal of...*”) and its prime purpose, as the academic marketplace will not long be fooled by misleading or unrealistic titles.

Non-English titles of journals deserve particular attention. A title which has clear meaning to a national audience in a particular language may be meaningless in an international context. Moreover, some words lose their meaning in translation. For example, “re-animation” is not generally recognised as meaning “resuscitation” in English language usage. In general terms, it is helpful to use an anglicised subtitle on the website, on the journal title page and on article page headers to communicate the purpose of the journal to an international readership.

Whatever title is chosen, it is essential to check that the title is unique, distinctive, explicit and informative. In many M&HS subject fields, there are significant numbers of journals which share very, bland, similar and often almost meaningless titles, particularly where words like “*World*” and “*International*” are used. This near-duplication of titles causes confusion in the academic literature. It also highlights a problem which is seen from time, when unscrupulous and “predatory” publishers may “hijack” a title to cause deliberate confusion and attract content from a successful title through “product mimicry”.

The Roles of the Editors and the Editorial Teams

Successful organisations have a clearly identifiable leader who sets the direction, strategy and values of the organisation. The Editor in Chief fulfils that role in academic journal publishing. He or she should be supported by an effective team of executive Associate and Deputy Editors, who are also prepared to exercise

operational responsibility in the running of the journal and in the development of manuscript flow and quality assurance.

It is now common practice to recruit large numbers of individuals to non-operational editorial board posts, and indeed to offer titular roles on editorial boards to reviewers. The question that the senior executive board of every journal should ask themselves is whether any and all members of editorial boards are adding value to the strategy of the journal, and if so in what way. The management of editorial boards may usefully include informal or formal contracts of engagement, and time limited terms of appointment in board membership roles.

The Editors also need to have an effective working relationship with the publisher and with the editorial team. In circumstances where there is no formal publisher and the Society or the Institution is also the publisher, consideration should be given to the advantages of working with a professional academic publisher who can add value to the journal through professional expertise in presentation and electronic distribution networks.

Regional journals with international ambitions are also encouraged to diversify their editorial boards regionally, nationally and internationally. This exercise is not for “window dressing”. It is about finding individuals who add real value to the journal through their diverse experience, advice, international connections and willingness to guide the work of the Editors to secure wider success for the Journal.

All individuals with ambitions to take on leadership roles in academic publishing should be encouraged to seek out courses and training material on the specific skills of Journal Leadership.

Competition versus Collaboration: National and Regional Champion Journals

There is now very substantial replication of subject matter in regional, national, institutional and subject-specific Journals in the global Scopus M&HS portfolio, as would be expected in an expanding collection of 8000 such journals. Competition is healthy and necessary, but there is a point at which the sheer volume of similar

content can “drown out” quality. There is therefore a strong case to be made in many regions and subject fields for the consolidation of the large numbers of weaker journals into fewer, higher performing “national champion” journals with greater critical mass of content and expertise.

In particular, a large number of single institutional university health journals are submitted to Scopus for evaluation. In some countries, healthcare institutions are clearly in publishing and reputational competition with their national and regional peer institutions, whether through multi-disciplinary or subject specific journals. The publication of an institutional journal is understandably a source of pride. However, most such journals suffer from the similar constraint of a narrow authorship, readership and editorial base, and they struggle to secure sufficient quality and specialisation of content to become competitive with their national, regional and international competitors.

This local focus on the institution rather than national or regional partnerships does not stimulate academic competitiveness or challenge institutional authors to publish in the best international journals in their fields. In such circumstances, serious consideration should be given to partnerships, mergers and collaborations with similar institutional journals, to secure the benefits of mass, and to produce fewer national and regional champion journals in any one field. Where sector consolidation cannot be secured on a voluntary basis, it may be encouraged by representative bodies and professional associations, government agencies and national policies. The Scopus assessment process takes no formal position in such matters, but it is self-evident that consolidation should be considered and encouraged when and where such duplication exists.

The Importance of a Clear Strategy for Every Journal

A clear strategy for the journal content and market position allows the editors, the publishers, reviewers, authors and readers to understand its purpose and to help to drive up quality and usage. The strategy is set out most clearly in the title of the journal, and in the clarity

of purpose as set out in the Aims and Scope of the Journal. It requires a clear understanding of the target audience, of the subject area, and of the academic marketplace and the competition. It also requires a realistic understanding of the immediate constraints and opportunities for the journal, and the means to interact with the potential readership and authorship.

A strategy to produce a journal of record for the academic output of an institution is an honourable purpose. However, this requires a very different approach to that of developing a competitive international journal wherein, for example, English language co-publication will be much more important than for a local or institutional journal. Of course, if your strategy is solely or primarily the maximisation of income from an “Author Pays” business model, then you may be much less concerned about the quality and subject specificity of the articles that you publish.

The Long Game and the Pursuit of Quality

If the core purpose is the pursuit of quality and reputation in the subject field of your journal, and if the editors value a rising place in the global journal rankings, then they sometimes have to be prepared to play a very long game, which may be measured in years and decades. In the early years, the journal will almost certainly not be swamped with high quality articles, as these will be directed to the leading competitor journals in your field.

Regrettably and perhaps inevitably given the huge numbers of journals and articles in circulation, much published MH&S content has little impact, because it is repetitive and lacking in true originality or wider system and societal value. This is evidenced by the lack of any citation activity after publication for most published articles, as can be easily and graphically seen in the *SCImago* journal listings (see <https://www.scimagojr.com/>).

All publishing and broadcast media are in competition for the attention of the viewer and reader, and the attention span may be only a few seconds and minutes. You must therefore be prepared to make the best of the manuscripts which you do receive. It is essential that your published manuscripts capture the reader’s

attention through the quality and clarity of the title, the abstract and the text of the published content.

This will often require the robust editing of manuscripts, tables and figures to communicate the message of a paper in the clearest way, using key points, plentiful subtitles and clear and credible conclusions. In human communication, “Less is often More”, and visual impact is an important form of communication

SCImago and the Evaluation of the Competitive Marketplace

For editors and publishers who are trying to understand the place of their journal in the international academic marketplace, there are a number of useful resources. For those with access to Scopus itself, there is rich data on individual journals and on journal rankings in their subject fields. The *SCImago* website is a particularly valuable source of information on journal performance and rankings at regional and national level by subject field.

SCImago aggregates and repackages data from Scopus and other sources:

- to produce annually updated rankings of all journals within Scopus by subject field, globally, regionally and nationally;
- to produce clear graphical charts of performance of individual journals by a number of metrics;
- to understand national performance in all subject fields, as for example Medicine.

See <https://www.scimagojr.com/countrysearch.php?country=RU&area=2700>

Publishers, editors and national agencies can thus use this open source data in a number of practical ways, as for example:

- to understand the characteristics of competitor journals;
- to identify similar journals for national partnerships and sector consolidation;
- to identify subject areas of particular strength, weakness and competitive opportunity in any region.

Technology and Change

In a very short time, there has been a radical transformation of academic publishing, from

paper based to digital formats. The pace of change will continue as organisations learn to make the best and most efficient use of new technologies for the creation, distribution and analysis of academic journals and content. Nevertheless, the basics of academic journal publishing seem likely to endure, regardless of the detail of changes in technology and publishing practice. Ethical publishing, editorial oversight and the peer review process provide academic output with a hallmark of quality and user trust which cannot otherwise be achieved.

Those journals which can demonstrate quality, sustainability and market appeal through their manuscript flow, robust per review, usage statistics and other metrics of added value and societal impact will succeed in the long term.

It also seems likely that those organisations which invest heavily in the quality assurance process, as with Scopus, will retain an enduring role and value for individuals, institutions and governments.

In Summary

This article is intended to help Russian academic editorial teams and publishers to understand the thinking required to enter and progress up the international academic rankings. Particularly in the Medicine and Health Sciences fields. The Scopus STEP system is intentionally supportive of all such teams, and those journals which do not secure immediate accession to Scopus should nevertheless find the exercise to be helpful and conducive to future success.

Scientific publication represents a global language which brings communities and nations together, and which speeds up the dissemination of knowledge for global benefit. This has been clearly highlighted in the international partnerships and flow of information which has blunted the global Covid epidemic through 2020, and which has dramatically accelerated the development of the panel of vaccines which are about to be deployed worldwide. We are all privileged to be members of this global academic community, and partners in the enduring worldwide pursuit of excellence in academic output and communication.

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David Rew qualified in Medicine from the University of Cambridge UK in 1981. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1985. He trained as a General Surgeon in NHS Hospitals in London and the South of England, and he has been a Consultant Surgeon in Southampton since 1999. He served as Editor in Chief of the *European Journal of Surgical Oncology* (EJSO) from 2003 to 2009, taking it from regional to worldwide distribution and impact. He was a member of the *Council of the Committee on Publication Ethics* (COPE) from 2008 to 2010. He was invited to join the *Content Selection and Advisory Board* of Scopus as the international Subject Chair for Medicine in 2009, since when he has evaluated some 2400 applicant journals and has contributed widely to policy and strategic developments of the Scopus system, including constructive support for regional advisory boards, editorial teams and publishers.

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