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The UEG Journal is steaming ahead

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This December issue marks the last of the year 2020, and we look back on 12 months of increasing submissions and a reduction in the time to first decision (now 9 days) and final decision (now 15 days). We also witnessed a fantastic growth in readership. The total number of full-text downloads across platforms increased from 2018 to 2019 by 55% and this trend is set to continue in 2020.¹ We are developing and refining our visual abstracts for the journal and will further enhance this feature in 2021.

2020 brought COVID-19 to our continent; the *UEG Journal* has kept up with the pandemic and published important lessons on how to deal with various aspects of the disease.² Gastroenterology and Endoscopy training has been disrupted for many of us during the first wave of the pandemic, and the Journal distributed instructions on how to cope with these disturbances.³ We published articles addressing the effect of COVID-19 on patients with inflammatory bowel disease using biologicals, on how to interpret liver biochemistry results in patients with COVID-19, and which precautions and measures are needed in the endoscopy suite, among other corona virus-related topics.⁴

In Stockholm on 16 April 2011 the UEG Council decided to enter the publishing world with its own gastroenterology journal. After negotiations with different publishing houses an 8-year contract was signed with SAGE in London, and from different applicants Jan Tack from Leuven was elected as founding Editor-in-Chief for the new *UEG Journal*, which launched its first issue in February 2013. With content available on Pubmed Central, submissions rose rapidly, the quality of articles improved, and by 2015 the Journal was assigned its first impact factor. SAGE had the courage to join us in the endeavour of launching a new journal in a crowded field, and proved to be a reliable partner when dealing with expected teething problems. The journal grew in size, scope, quality and impact, rapidly including UEG clinical practice guidelines⁵ and also advice about how to implement them.⁶ As an Editorial team we are deeply indebted to SAGE, and in particular to Sara Purdy and Hester Tilbury, for continuous guidance and support.

With our contract approaching its end UEG advertised a request for proposals to different publishing houses, and after successful negotiations the *UEG*

Journal will move to a new home in 2021. Our new publisher is Wiley, one of the world's largest in and outside the Gastroenterology arena, and one highly committed to the changing landscape of scientific publishing.

'cOAlition S' is an international consortium of research agencies and funding organizations committed to open access for all scientific content and it launched the 'Plan S Initiative' for Open Access publishing in 2018. Plan S will require that, from 2021 onwards, all publically funded research projects should be published in fully open access journals, rather than hybrid or subscription-only journals. UEG fully supports this view because *UEG Journal* would otherwise lose most European authors with grant support from their national or EU funding agencies. This will, however, have consequences for the publishing model of the Journal. Plan S encourages Gold Open Access (pay-to-publish), which means that, as of 2021, *UEG Journal* content will be freely available to everyone with a computer but authors will have to pay a moderate article publication charge (APC) once their submission is accepted by the editors. This does not affect all authors. Wiley is one of the initial supporters of the 'research4live' programme, and authors from many lower income countries will therefore receive automatic waivers for their APCs and publish for free. Wiley is also an early adopter of National Alliance Licenses. In many European countries all universities and hospitals which have joined such a national alliance maintain the benefit for authors employed at their institution to publish in Wiley journals without being charged an APC. We look forward to these changes because they will increase the visibility, accessibility and impact of *UEG Journal* further.

This time of the year also marks the end of the tenure of the UEG trainee editors. Two years ago, coinciding with the arrival of the new editorial board, we started to have trainee editors in our midst. Using the Young Talent Pool we were able to attract six highly motivated researchers: Lucas Wauters, Vincenzo Cardinale, Laura Kivelä, Milena Di Leo, Julien Kirchgessner and Keith Siau. We have come to know them as keen contributors to the Journal as and authors of their research.^{7–9} They have assisted the editors for 2 years with a variety of tasks such as peer

review, proofreading, search engine optimization, or just by improving the results we deliver. It is appropriate to highlight the efforts of Keith Siau, because he did a formidable job as our social media editor.^{10–13} He started the @UEGJournal twitter handle and he managed, over the course of 20 months, to attract over 1700 followers. The continuous effort by Keith to highlight the content of the Journal was instrumental in increasing the visibility of *UEG Journal*. We are now requesting social media handles and texts for tweets from authors as part of the submission process. This has been introduced to make it easier to connect with our authors and to promote their work effectively through the journal, UEG and publisher social media channels.

The *UEG Journal* looks forward to a bright and successful future in 2021 and we are indebted to all the authors, reviewers, editors, editorial and publishing team members, as well as our staff at UEG headquarters in Vienna who worked very hard to bring us where we are today – and will continue to help us towards an even greater future.

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