

## AIMS AND SCOPE

This editorial seeks to draw our attention to the central role of health research in identifying solutions to persistent challenges to meeting health goals, and as a core component of economic development, irrespective of the level of economic development of the country. As such, the 'leave no one behind' principle which underpins the sustainable development agenda applies to health research as well. *Health Services Insights (HIS)* contributes to meeting the need for equity in health research embracing a multidisciplinary approach to share comprehensive evidence.

Should we care about equity in scientific publication? Indeed yes. The global commitment to achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) warrants paying attention to equity in research production and scientific publication. Equity in global health research is a major concern with arguments that it favours high income countries more than middle- and low-income countries. Some scholars assert that not enough consideration is paid to diversity and inclusion.<sup>1</sup> Several challenges partially explain the observed phenomena including the composition of the editorial boards of journals which in some instances is viewed as not reflective of the diverse and multidisciplinary nature of global health research, and the high and unaffordable article processing charges impacting the participation of researchers from low-income countries negatively.<sup>2,3</sup>

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 and target 3.8, on achieving universal health coverage (UHC) urges countries to develop local solutions informed by contextualised research as emphasised by Dye et al<sup>4</sup> who state that "A scientific research agenda is needed to provide the answers" to achieving UHC. Further the WHO 2013 World Health Report, states that when countries committed to achieving UHC they launched a research agenda.<sup>5</sup> Solarin and Yen,<sup>6</sup> in their analysis of the relationship between research output and economic growth in 169 countries concluded that research impacts on economic growth positively irrespective of the level of economic development of the country. Relatedly, the 'leave no one' behind principle that underpins the SDG Agenda should also apply to research and scientific publication.

At the core of achieving UHC is ensuring equitable delivery of quality health services to the population without financial hardship. Although this is not entirely a new concept, its realisation in a majority of countries, irrespective of the level of economic growth, remains elusive. The reasons for countries' inability to achieve UHC are diverse including health system and governance challenges; individual and community preferences; socio-economic and cultural considerations.<sup>7</sup> Lack of political will to invest in health is partially evidenced by the failure to meet the Abuja commitment made over 20 years ago by Heads of state to allocate at least 15% of the national budget

to health.<sup>8</sup> To date, only 2 countries in Africa have met this target.<sup>9</sup> The role of evidence in exploring plausible solutions is paramount and *Health Services Insights (HIS)* journal fills in this space bringing to the fore best practices that can be scaled up as well as challenges that must be mitigated. Abiuro and Allegri<sup>10</sup> argue that UHC is a multi-dimensional concept that embodies legal, social, economic and public health concepts. Additionally, generating evidence from several perspectives is essential to guide countries on how to provide a wide range of services to the whole population. The multifaceted nature of UHC calls for multidisciplinary research which is implied in the scope of our journal as well as the composition of our editorial board.

*Health Services Insights (HIS)* aspires to embody inclusion and diversity as well as to address inequalities through several measures to provide opportunities to researchers, practitioners and policy makers globally. The modified scope of the journal and the planned expansion of the editorial board will ensure that evidence from multiple perspectives is availed to guide dialogue and policy development. Full article processing charge waivers granted to researchers from low-income countries provide an opportunity to authors from the global south to not only share their work, but also advance their careers. At *Health Services Insights (HIS)* we believe that no credible evidence should be wasted, and we offer several article types to help researchers share their results. Timely sharing of evidence is of essence and so we ensure a quick turnaround on submitted manuscripts. Given the global reach of our journal, we share evidence that is of interest to a global audience, which is reflected in our publications that cover high-middle- and low-income countries.

Scholars have argued that sharing evidence through scientific journals is limiting.<sup>11</sup> At *Health Services Insights (HIS)*, although our journal is open access with no barriers to accessing research once published; we believe dissemination of evidence is beyond just publishing a scientific paper and, this should not be solely left to the researcher. The journal offers additional support through social media and other channels to ensure your published manuscript reaches a wider audience.



We welcome you to engage with the journal of *Health Services Insights (HSI)* as researchers seeking to disseminate your research; as policy makers looking for solutions to persistent problems in service delivery and providing insight based on your efforts to solve problems; as peer reviewers supporting us to improve the quality of what we publish and as social media participants, discussing published articles and sharing them with a broad audience.

### Author Contribution

JNO conceptualized and drafted the editorial.

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