

The IJOEM, DOAJ Seal, and Plan S

Influenced by the high penetration of the Internet throughout the world, Open Access (OA) publishing was officially born more than 15 years ago. The OA movement was begun to provide users with free access to scholarly publications for any lawful purposes.¹ There are several types of OA. In “gold OA” journals, authors pay an article processing charge to publish in the journal. In “platinum OA” journals, authors do not need to pay for publication. Hybrid OA journals are a combination of subscription and gold OA models. Some OA journals provide immediate free access; others only after an embargo period of up to 3 years, which protects their subscription revenue.¹

Established in 2003, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is an online directory of peer-reviewed OA journals. In December 2012, DOAJ announced that it had introduced new criteria for including journals in the Directory and intends to collect more information about the journals it lists.² As part of this new accreditation process, journals already included in DOAJ were asked to reapply to be retained in the directory.

The IJOEM was accepted for inclusion in the DOAJ after its very first issue. Its reapplication was also successful and, based on the new criteria, the *Journal* was awarded the DOAJ seal, a mark reflecting a high level of openness and adherence to best-practices and highest publishing standards.³ To the best of our knowledge, *The IJOEM* is the only biomedical journal in the region to be awarded the DOAJ seal. Many journals in developing countries face problems in acquiring the DOAJ seal

for lack of ready access to advanced digital tools, including permanent identifiers (*eg*, digital object identifiers, DOI) and online archiving systems (*eg*, PubMed Central).⁴

The DOAJ seal, although a sign of adherence to the highest publishing standards, does not indicate the scientific quality of a journal. However, Medline (*Index Medicus*), the most prestigious indexing system in the biomedical sciences, has indexed all the *Journal's* issues, including those published before *The IJOEM* was accepted for indexing.⁵ Medline usually indexes only those issues published after the journal is accepted for indexing. Among more than 400 biomedical journals published in Iran, Medline retrospectively indexed all issues of only 3 journals after acceptance. Given Medline's well-known strict prerequisites for including new journals, being indexed reaffirms the quality of our journal.

On September 4, 2018, a consortium of research funders, with the support of the European Commission and the European Research Council, established the cOAlition S (Plan S), an initiative to provide free, full, and immediate access to OA journals worldwide.^{6,7} According to Plan S, as of 2021, no scholarly publication should be locked behind a paywall or by an embargo.

Many OA journals are published in the world, but for the time being, only a few have implemented Plan S.⁸ I am pleased to inform you that *The IJOEM*, a platinum OA journal, is the only medical journal in the region that has implemented Plan S. This implementation is, indeed, in line with our primary mission to provide free access to quality scientific materials for all people throughout the world.

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We continue to improve our Web site;⁹ our Internet connection is now secure because we use an SSL connection. From this issue on, we will also provide podcasts for selected articles. Other changes are on the way—just wait and watch!

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Editorial Freedom at *The IJOEM*

The IJOEM is an international peer-reviewed journal which will publish articles relevant to epidemiology, prevention, diagnosis, and management of occupational and environmental diseases. It will also cover work-related injury and illness, accident and illness prevention, health promotion, health education, the establishment and implementation of health and safety standards, monitoring of the work environment, and the management of recognized hazards. *The IJOEM* adheres to the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) Policy on “The Relationship between Journal Editors-in-Chief and Owners” available at www.wame.org/resources/policies#independence. More specifically, the Editor-in-Chief has editorial independence and as such has full authority over the journal's editorial content including how and when information is published. Editorial decisions are based solely on the validity of the work and its importance to readers, not on the policies or commercial interests of the owner.

The IJOEM is the official journal of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Health Organization. The NIOC Health Organization—established as an independent entity—provides health and medical services to the population, including to NIOC employees and their families. Neither the NIOC nor the NIOC Health Organization interferes in the evaluation, selection or editing of individual articles, either directly or by creating an environment in which editorial decisions are strongly influenced.