



EFORT Open Reviews: Turbulence

Pierre Hoffmeyer¹

Listening to the news one cannot help but ponder the state of the world. Only a few months ago climate change occupied the front pages of all newspapers and stocks were way up. Associations and societies, and not least amongst them EFORT, were busily preparing their annual meetings. Then suddenly thunder and lightning struck our neatly organized affairs: The pandemic! All our plans are changed and to cite the poet Robert Burns: “The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry”. The virtual world came upon us, years in advance. Today, as I write, the Corona virus and its accompanying COVID-19 are the frontrunners in the media, the second wave is upon us and stocks are going down. COVID-19 assails everyone regardless of race, creed or status. Needless to say that the needy and the frail are the hardest hit and to cite Orwell, some are “more equal than others”. Nature has come back with a jolt reminding us of all its might and preeminence, things that we tend to forget so concentrated are we on our anthropocentrism. This virus impacts on all human activities including those in our own musculoskeletal specialty. In our hospitals elective surgery takes the back seat to allow for treatment of COVID-19-affected patients. The supply chains of medications, instruments and implants are obstructed. Travel is hindered, limiting exchange. Gatherings large and small are cancelled for fear of crowding and for a lack of attendees. The face mask has left the operating room to become a household item. Hopefully, by the time this editorial is published, the measures taken by those who govern and by each individual will have been efficacious to abate the spread.

Our orthopaedic specialty has become completely imbricated in globalization and has largely benefitted from the interaction of surgical and scientific activities all around the world. This is especially true for our Journal with its high-quality reviews from all continents. An author’s work from Asia will be analysed by a reviewer in South America and the paper will be accepted for publication in Europe. Globalization has become part of our way of life and is taken for granted although the pandemic has shown us some of its limits.

Knowledge knows no boundaries in our interconnected world and, unfortunately, as we are (again) learning, this also applies to diseases. While the material world is struggling with COVID-19, the immaterial world faces its ills also and more specifically those affecting the written

word. In the publishing domain, we also are plagued by particular ailments which must be met and vanquished. One of the more pervasive problems we face is plagiarism. This is an age-old ailment that once contracted leaves an enduring mark on its perpetrators and victims. Plagiarism is in essence indelible and the traces persist as long as the written word itself. One finds it in antiquity and Roman law acknowledges plagiarism as a crime. In our times, plagiarism remains an offence that cannot be erased from the records. The digital word is for eternity until the last computer becomes extinct and even then, knowledge will endure and also its negative aspects. To plagiarize an author is to commit theft. This can be very disturbing to the victim. In some cases, the consequences of the crime are limited to an ego bruise and ridicule but in others financial losses may be significant and more importantly in some cases careers may be at stake. The adequate response of an editor confronted with a plagiarized article published online and/or in print in a journal is retraction. In case of a book, any unsold copies must be destroyed and that can place a large financial burden on the publisher which will be transferred onto the plagiarizing authors. As for the plagiarizing author(s), a letter of apology to the plagiarized author(s) is a minimum requirement. At times, financial compensation will be sought by publishers and in some cases the conflict will end up in the courts if financial losses are significant. All in all, this is a lose-lose proposition for everyone concerned. Because most articles published in journals have multiple contributors, it is the duty of each author, and more specifically of the senior author, to ascertain that the paper submitted for publication adheres to the accepted principles of ethical scientific writing. As for the editor and publisher of a submitted paper, it is their responsibility to run the paper through anti-plagiarism software and take specific measures in case of suspicion. This way we will keep our publications clean and free of misdeeds.

EFORT Open Reviews is in good shape and doing well. The impact factor of 2.295 awarded to us in June confirms this. There is clearly a need for review papers that summarize current knowledge for the student, the resident in training or the busy specialist. We are receiving more and more systematic reviews, and these will further enhance the quality of the Journal. The online format is the future, a fact cruelly highlighted by the pandemic. Judging by the high numbers of downloads, reflecting a wide and

growing readership, EOR publications are well received. In the last three years, 230 reviews were published and citations have seen a big and steady increase. The most popular topics are Basic Science, Hip, Knee, Shoulder & Elbow and Trauma. More papers are needed in the areas of Paediatrics, Oncology, Foot & Ankle and Hand Surgery. The Journal is indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection, Google Scholar, and Scopus, as well as PubMed with free full text provided in PubMed Central. It is also listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals.

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AUTHOR INFORMATION

¹Editor-in-Chief, *EFORT Open Reviews*.

Correspondence should be sent to: P. Hoffmeyer: p.hoffmeyer@bluewin.ch

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