

The last impact factor of the European Heart Journal for the Zurich team: a farewell with pride!

Thomas F. Lüscher

Zurich Heart House, Switzerland

The Zurich team, with an amazing editorial staff at the Zurich Heart House and excellent editors covering the entire spectrum of cardiovascular medicine from Europe, USA and Asia, took over the *European Heart Journal* from Frans von de Werf in 2009 with an impact factor of 8.7, bi-weekly issues only, but in good shape.

The beginning

In its first editorial, the editors made it clear what they wanted to achieve with the *European Heart Journal*: The *EHJ* goes global [1]! This concept paid off with the invaluable help of excellent editors not only from across Europe, but also from the United States, particularly Bernard Gersh from the Mayo Clinic, and Hiroaki Shimokawa from Japan, among many others, as well as the core team in Zurich (fig. 1). This has been implemented step by step.

New features and new design

Of particular note, the new editors implemented a number of new features, particularly CardioPulse, run by Andros Tofield (fig. 1 left), that became extremely popular, with hundreds of thousands of views and downloads, the week-

ly Issue@Glance, that summarised in a nutshell the content of each issue and was also provided as a podcast, moving from bi-weekly to weekly issues, the discussion forum for readers, among many other features that allowed a steady growth of quality [2], reputation and impact.

The submissions from around the world steadily increased, as did the reputation of the journal [3]. The downloads reached impressive levels of more than 10 million/year, and more and more papers of quality, including trials in the FAST TRACK section, were submitted and, if reviewed favourably, eventually accepted. The downside of the success was a declining acceptance rate, due to an increasing quality standard. Indeed, 30 years after its initiation, the *European Heart Journal* reached for the first time an impact factor of around 10 [4], and it grew further. This was achieved through rigorous peer review, regularly involving at least three reviewers and two editors as well as a statistical editor, careful checking by the highly professional editorial staff (fig. 1 right) for similar articles in MedLine and overlap with previous published work.

We also had to take ethical issues seriously, in particular conflicts of interests and their true issues [5], as well as scientific integrity [6]. To that end, we created an ethics com-

Figure 1: The editorial team of the *European Heart Journal* in Zurich with Andros Tofield, editor of CardioPulse and the editorial managers (right).



Correspondence:
Professor Thomas F. Lüscher, MD, FRCP
Zurich Heart House
Hottingerstreet 14
CH-8032 Zurich
cardio[at]tomluescher.ch

mittee of the the ESC Journal family chaired by Maarten Simmons from Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The committee fortunately did not have to handle a large number of cases, but the issue became more prominent recently. Upon recommendations of the ethics committee, the editors launched a number of in-depth investigations to ensure that papers published in the *European Heart Journal* can withstand a thorough check of the data [7].

Finally, the design of the journal also changed eventually to the current uniform style of all journals of the ESC Journal Family (fig. 2)

The ESC Journal Family

It all started with one journal in 1980 with Desmond Julian as the editor. Slowly subspecialty journals became a need as cardiology grew. It started with *Eurpace*, then the *European Journal of Heart Failure* and lastly many others (fig. 3). Eventually, the family grew as did their impact thanks to the manuscript transfer implemented by the new editorial team. Today, all members of the ESC Journal Family have a decent, some an impressive, impact factor and provide a superb service to the growing number of specialised cardiologists.

Figure 2: The ESC Journal Family 2020.



Figure 3: The growth of the Impact of the *European Heart Journal* over 11 years.



Transfer to Rome

In September 2020, after 11 years, the Zurich team transferred the journal to Rome, to the excellent team of Filippo Crea, with whom we worked very intensively in the first 9 months of 2020 to assure a smooth transition of the journal into the new hands. To make the transition as smooth as possible, three of the editorial staff of the Zurich Heart House, particularly Amelia Meier, Johanna Huggler and Susanne Dedecke (fig. 1 left, second, third and fifth from the left) continued to work successfully with Filippo Crea's team in Rome from their home office to ensure that all the know-how acquired over a decade in publishing a high impact scientific journal was transferred to the Rome team. It was a great pleasure to see that Giovanni G. Camici, Francesco Paneni and Luca Liberale from the Centre for Molecular Cardiology in Zurich have also been asked to continue to work with the new editorial office in Rome.

The last impact factor

It is a great pleasure to announce that the last impact factor of the Zurich team for 2019 and 2020 was published at the end of June and reached an incredible 29.983, which is more than 3-fold greater than the one we had when taking over the *European Heart Journal*. This is the success of a team, of an outstanding editorial staff, committed deputy editors and a large number of competent editors across the world, as well as experienced reviewers who voluntarily agreed to provide their expertise for the assessment of an increasing number of submissions and allowing the team to select the best papers for our readers.

The last farewell

This is a farewell with great joy and satisfaction, as well as gratitude to all those who worked with me and our core

team over more than a decade, as well as to our authors who submitted their best work and our readers who enjoyed reading the *European Heart Journal* and cited its publications – this eventually allowed such an amazing success. With this, I wish Filippo Crea and his team all the best to continue along these lines and further develop the *European Heart Journal* with their ideas for a great journey into the future.

Zurich, July 15th, 2021

Thomas F. Lüscher, MD, FRCP Editor-in-Chief EHIJ 2009–2020

References

1. Lüscher TF, Gersh B, Brugada J, Landmesser U, Ruschitzka FT, Serruys PW. The European Heart Journal goes global: the road ahead of the editorial team 2009–2011. *Eur Heart J*. 2009 Jan;30(1):1–5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehn549>. PubMed. 1522-9645
2. Lüscher TF. Good publishing practice. *Eur Heart J*. 2012 Mar;33(5):557–61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehs506>. PubMed. 1522-9645
3. Lüscher TF, Gersh B, Hendricks G, Landmesser U, Ruschitzka F, Wijns W. The best of the European Heart Journal: look back with pride. *Eur Heart J*. 2012 May;33(10):1161–71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehs098>. PubMed. 1522-9645
4. Lüscher TF, Brugada J, Gersh BJ, Landmesser U, Serruys PW, Murphy S, et al. Happy birthday European Heart Journal: in 30 years, from Cinderella to centre stage. *Eur Heart J*. 2010 Aug;31(16):1945–50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehq243>. PubMed. 1522-9645
5. Lüscher TF. Conflicts of interest and the truth of scientific discovery: an editor's perspective. *Eur Heart J*. 2016 Mar;37(9):738–40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehw011>. PubMed. 1522-9645
6. Lüscher TF. The codex of science: honesty, precision, and truth—and its violations. *Eur Heart J*. 2013 Apr;34(14):1018–23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehs063>. PubMed. 1522-9645
7. Lüscher TF, Fox K, Hamm C, Carter RE, Taddei S, Simoons M, et al. Scientific integrity: what a journal can and cannot do. *Eur Heart J*. 2020 Dec;41(48):4552–5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehaa963>. PubMed. 1522-9645