

Belize Journal of Medicine: towards a higher stage

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In its first issue, published in November 2011, the BJM Editorial Team declared that the new publication “looks forward to creating a space for communication between health professionals... in our country” and “it enables publishing relevant papers from other professionals outside of Belize.” Since its founding, the journal declared itself to be an open access publication mainly oriented to public health issues and tropical diseases in the Central American and Caribbean.

With the increasing extension of the practice of open science, and the widespread use of digital platforms in scientific publications, BJM began in 2022 the implementation of a Development Plan that includes the necessary actions to increase visibility and the positioning of the journal, as well as its synchronism with current trends in scientific communication. Among the priorities of this plan are:

- Update of the electronic platform.
- Update the policies that govern the operation of the publication.
- Rewriting the authors' guidelines.
- Internationalization of the Editorial Committee.
- Attention to the work of writing and editing the scientific text.
- Preparation of a staggered positioning plan.
- Establishment of incentive policy for referees.
- Implementation of measures towards the opening of science (Open Science).

Since October 2023, Belize Journal of Medicine has been using a new online manuscript management system that facilitates the transparency of the editorial process, as well as its traceability and security. Open Journal System is characterized by being an open-source system with extensive international development support. The system also provides wide visibility over the Internet since it uses metadata exchange protocols with the main search engines, which increases visibility. All content published since the creation of the journal is today available on this platform.

The new editorial policies establish with much greater clarity the guidelines for the operation of the editorial management activity and constitute the axis of each of the actions that are developed in this process. The new Authors Guidelines exhaustively detail the requirements for sending each of the manuscripts according to the type of document. The expansion of the Editorial Committee has been carried

out with the objective of increasing the recognition of the journal and its international prestige, which is why prominent researchers have been summoned and have agreed to be part of our team.

Step by step, measures or models will be adopted in favor of transparency in editorial management, including the acceptance of manuscripts on preprint servers and the opening of research data through deposit on dedicated servers. The peer review process tends to become an incalculable source of shared knowledge.

The aforementioned elements represent the starting point to strategically increase the positioning of the journal worldwide.

BJM is focused on the internationalization of the journal. The actions include to increase the body of reviewers, diversify the origin and content of articles, and promote the international collaboration in research. At the same time, we will strength the exchange between authors to increase the interoperability of the publication.

By 2024, it is our priority to comply with a strategic visibility and positioning plan that will allow us to recognize the bibliographic spaces of scientific integration such as directories and databases and to insert ourselves from the local, the regional until we reach the most universal, according to the selection criteria are met. Starting this year, BJM increases its frequency to three annual deliveries, which favors the shortening of the publication cycle.

As it was stated in the XL Annual Congress of the Belize Medical Association (BMDA), strengthen the ties with BMDA and other scientific societies in the region is a need for BJM. Our journal has the potential to be the scientific publication of reference for Belizean and Central American and the Caribbean health professionals. To serve as a route to promote, exchange and improve the scientific production in Belize and the area is our scope.

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