

Editorial

Open Access

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One year *Innovative Surgical Sciences* – achievements and future perspectives

DOI 10.1515/iss-2017-0030

Time passes so quickly. Just a year ago, the German Society of Surgery published the first issue of its own Open Access journal *Innovative Surgical Sciences* (ISS). The story behind this landmark in the history of the German Society of Surgery was outlined in an editorial [1]. Additionally, the special features of ISS were described. After 1 year, it is clear: the launch of the journal was successful. The main goals of the journal have been achieved and now is the right time to draw the first conclusions.

Due to the dedication of all surgical societies represented by the German Society of Surgery we are proud that ISS has an editorial board that represents all surgical disciplines. Additionally, many international colleagues joined the board, and the German Society of Surgery is very thankful for this engagement.

The first issue of ISS was published online in September 2016, and the first article, which had already been published online in April 2016, is still the most downloaded manuscript [2]. Overall, 46 manuscripts – reviews, original articles and case reports – were submitted from February 2016 to March 2017 and were considered for publication. Of course, most of the articles came from within Germany, but the editorial office also received many manuscripts from all over the world, including Brazil, Japan, Canada and the USA. It is apparent that the visibility of ISS as an open access journal is already quite significant judging from the number of authors who submitted their research for consideration.

Most of the manuscripts covered the topics of digestive and general surgery, but articles on research in plastic and reconstructive surgery as well as experimental research were also frequently submitted. The articles' rejection rate within the double-blind peer-review-process was 40%. Those of us on the editorial board are extremely grateful to our reviewers for the additional work that is associated with the critical review of the manuscripts. As a special and distinctive feature of ISS, all reviews are published as supplemental material together with the manuscript so that maximum transparency is guaranteed. We were also pleased that some reviewers agreed to publish their names. In comparison to all the other surgical journals

worldwide this transparency is indeed a very special feature of ISS. In 2016 and 2017, almost 50% of the reviewers agreed to publish their names, which is much higher than originally expected.

Another goal that we set at the beginning was a quick turnaround in the handling of the submitted articles. In 2016, the time from first submission to first decision was just 24 days, and this increased to 32 days in 2017. We feel that this is extremely fast, but as part of the learning process we qualified that goal because we cannot expect, in particular, our reviewers to answer as quickly as we initially thought. Nevertheless, the time from first submission to final acceptance averaged 2 months for all accepted articles. This achievement is due to the excellent performance of the reviewers: the total average time to complete the review was just 10 days. As Editor-in-Chief, I would like to thank all the authors as well as all our reviewers for the great support they have given to ISS so far.

In addition to the handling of invited and originally submitted articles, ISS also published all accepted abstracts of the annual congress of the German Society of Surgery [3]. This demonstrates that ISS is headed in the right direction to become the official journal of the German Society of Surgery. Once again, it must be emphasized that ISS, in contrast to some other surgical journals, is owned by the German Society of Surgery. Furthermore, we are making the utmost effort to promote the journal. To further establish the journal within the scientific community, we applied to Clarivate Analytics – Web of Science (formerly Thomson Reuters) for an impact factor. Of course, we hope that ISS will be accepted, but it is worthwhile to note that the application process takes approximately 9–12 months and that upon first application the acceptance rate is just 5%. In the case of not being accepted the next possible application date will be February 2019. We also applied to Scopus ResearchGate and to PubMed Central and expect a reply in September 2017 from the latter. In addition to these applications, ISS is already registered in ResearchGate and all authors have uploaded their articles. ResearchGate measures citations, amongst others, and can therefore give information about the impact of a journal. As another first step, ISS

is already listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (www.doaj.org).

After 1 year of ISS, the journal can be compared to a newborn infant: it needs a lot of support and understanding, but it constantly grows. As Editor-in-Chief, and on behalf of the German Society of Surgery, I kindly ask for your continued support as a member of the editorial board, as an author and reviewer and last, but not least, as a reader, to establish ISS in the fascinating scientific world of surgery.

Author Statement

Research funding: Authors state no funding involved.

Conflict of interest: Authors state no conflict of interest.

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