

AboutOpen: research, real world evidence, points of view and the transfer of knowledge

In recent years, most research fields witnessed technological progresses at a pace which was not envisioned only a couple of decades ago. As an example, in clinical medicine the opportunity and the complexity of timely recognition and disease management has grown exponentially due to a number of factors, including the availability of ever-sophisticated diagnostic tools, of novel therapeutic options and the continuous research toward personalised medicine.

The clinical practice following the most current guidelines on the use of newer drugs is based on data from randomized clinical trials that, although methodologically very rigorous, may not reflect the complexity and heterogeneity of patients who are taken care of by specialists in day-to-day practice.

Evidence obtained from observational studies, series of patients, or even single clinical cases, now referred to as *Real World Evidence*, is often neglected by peer-reviewed literature. This hinders the possibility to collect, analyse, properly describe, publish, index and share among peers the evidence arising from day-to-day clinical practice. These observations are critical for the advancement of our knowledge, especially in those settings, like rare diseases, where data are more difficult to collect and analyse.

Perhaps even more important, the proof-of-concept observations, out-of-the-box thoughts and opinions of individuals or group of researchers and scientists in different fields are often confined to blogs and do not receive the editorial care and visibility that they deserve within the scientific community.

Finally, language barrier is still a major obstacle to the spreading of knowledge and experience in non-english speaking countries outside the academic world. This is most relevant for properly addressing the increasing demand for academic institution to fulfil their third mission (1), i.e taking responsibility for the society challenges through targeted use, transfer and communication of academic knowledge.

Based of the above considerations, we plan, starting in 2019, to upgrade and strengthen AboutOpen, an open access peer reviewed journal launched a few years ago.

Under the umbrella of AboutScience, a novel publishing company, the journal aims to publish content which contributes to increasing our knowledge and experience in clinical medicine and healthcare in its broadest term, including digital innovation, health technology assessment, narrative medicine, patient engagement, public involvement and other topics of growing impact.

Published articles will span the full spectrum of medical science, pharma, biotech and healthcare technology. Points of view and narrative reviews on the above subjects are also suitable for publication. The journal is an online-only continuous publication, ensuring rapid publication upon acceptance. Articles can be published either in English or in local language with an English abstract. Currently, supported languages are French, Italian, German and Spanish. If authors are comfortable in writing in local language but would also like their article to be published in English to reach a broader audience, once the article is accepted they may have it professionally translated for a basic fee.

The contents of AboutOpen will be structured in several disciplines and the peer review process will be led by experts, thus ensuring a rapid and effective evaluation of manuscripts. Whilst the initial focus is on clinical medicine, it is foreseen that the scope of the journal will expand with the inclusion of a wider range of other disciplines.

An automated online submission system, powered by Open Journal System, together with professional copyediting and typesetting of articles, ensures quality of the submission process and final output.

We hope that these developments will attract a growing number of submissions and look forward to welcoming them in the journal. We are ABOUT to be OPEN.

Giulio Zuanetti
Editor in Chief
AboutOpen

References

1. EU Lifelong learning Program. Fostering and Measuring 'Third Mission' in Higher Education Institutions. Available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308745768_Green_Paper_Fostering_and_Measuring_Third_Mission_in_Higher_Education_Institutions. Accessed 28 dec 2018

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