

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief of *The Pacific Northwest Journal of Surgery*

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ABSTRACT: This is an opening editorial letter from the Editor-in-Chief regarding the aims and objectives of *The Pacific Northwest Journal of Surgery*.

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In recent years, we have witnessed an explosion in the number of online scientific journals. Facilitated by the relative ease of online publishing and the growing power of online publishing houses, thousands of new open-access journals have appeared. Often filling niche topics, these new journals have progressively descriptive or catchy titles. Perhaps the ultra-specialization of journals isn't a bad thing: The efficiency of searching on pubmed or google scholar is making the classic model of scientific journal consumption obsolete. Journals on obscure subjects are no longer dependent on circulation and references, and can now simply allow readers to arrive at their doorstep after search engine keyword searches. The era of efficiency seemed upon us.

Unfortunately, thousands of new online journals flourished, representing nothing more than scams.¹ They aggressively send out mass solicitations via email for article submissions, and sometimes editorial positions. They promise "rapid turnaround times" and provide hints that submissions will get easy reviews. The peer-review process becomes a formality on the way to the press. They frequently hide their publication fees, but authors are later asked to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars per article. They are rarely indexed by pubmed, or cited by others. Many simply vanish if they prove unprofitable. By participating in this scheme, these predatory journals,² and the authors who choose them, have contributed to an adulteration of the scientific publishing, driven by monetization as well as the competitive culture of academia.

One way to combat these predatory journals is for field leaders to compile "green lists" of reputable journals.³ Although helpful, this does not completely remove the incentive for many authors to submit.

The primary aim of the Pacific Northwest Journal of Surgery (PNWJS; <https://www.pnwjs.org/>) is to be a different kind of online open-access journal. You will not see us in your inboxes on Monday mornings urging you to *Submit Now!* We will not panhandle for editorial board members. Our editorial team and panel of reviewers will be academic surgeons, physicians, and scientists, who wish to volunteer their time and expertise to the Pacific Northwest Journal of Surgery. Our primary academic affiliation is with Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU): a public hospital serving a large catchment area in the Pacific Northwest region of North America. Submitting and publishing your article is free of cost at current time. In this way, we will distinguish ourselves from profit-driven and predatory journals. We will adhere to strict peer-review and editorial standards of academic publishing. Ultimately, we will let the Authors' contributions speak for themselves. Isn't this what the dialogue of science, at its core, should be?

The secondary aim of the PNWJS will be to provide a venue to publish case reports and academic discussions relating to current areas of debate in Surgery. It has become increasingly difficult to publish surgical cases in the literature, owing to limited space-per-issue in established journals, intense

competition among submissions, and the limited observational nature of case reports.⁴ As a result, only "exotic" cases are published in the literature, and yet a multitude of interesting cases offering practical contexts for discussion on current topics in surgery never see the light of day. Authors instead present these cases at association meetings, where discussion with peers is brief, and there is no guarantee of permanence. To start, the PNWJS will not place a cap on the number of case reports published per issue, and will not exclusively publish the rarest cases. Instead, the criteria for publication will be based on whether the discussion adds perspective to the current debate on the topic at hand. The focus will be broad: Submissions from all surgical subspecialties and related topics will be welcome for peer-review.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Pacific Northwest Journal of Surgery*.

Cristian D. Valenzuela, MD

Editor-in-Chief
The Pacific Northwest Journal of Surgery

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