Editorial

Peter Schuff-Werner and Heike Jahnke

The *Journal of Laboratory Medicine* starts the new decade with Open Access

<https://doi.org/10.1515/labmed-2020-0003>

The Editors of the *Journal of Laboratory Medicine*, its publisher De Gruyter and the German Society of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (DGKL) would like to wish all its readers, authors, reviewers and all other contributors a good and successful new decade.

Forty-four years after the launch of the new scientific journal with the title “LaboratoriumsMedizin”, the DGKL Executive Board, the publisher and the journal management has decided to switch over from subscription to Open Access publication, starting in 2020. This is an important milestone in developing and changing the Journal’s profile, after the introduction of the submission and peer-review system ScholarOne Manuscripts in 2011, change to English only as the publication language in 2017 and the establishment of an international editorial board at the end of 2018.

What is the background of these editorial decisions?

Originally, the journal was founded as the scientific organ of the German Society of Laboratory Medicine to make the scientific work and educational activities of German laboratory physicians, and later also clinical chemists, visible to a broad auditorium.

After the successful launch and many years of high publication output, the acceptance – both by authors and readers – of the German-language journal “LaboratoriumsMedizin” decreased considerably due to the increasing internationalization of scientific research and the focus on English as the academic language: ranking and citations were accordingly low. The low impact factor led German authors to submit and publish their scientific work in other, internationally more recognized journals. To counteract this development is the rationale of our current decisions: In the past 2 years, the number of submitted manuscripts increased considerably, and the impact factor is developing continuously toward a positive direction.

The Journal’s original scientific aims and scopes such as diagnostic aspects of the clinical laboratory, and technical, regulatory and educational topics will not change

as a result of the decision to change to Open Access. The Journal will continue publishing competent and timely review articles on clinical, methodological and pathogenic aspects of modern laboratory diagnostics. All reviews and opinion papers, original articles, short communications, case reports, point/counterpoint articles and letters to the editor are critically reviewed by at least two competent experts in the field.

In contrast to many newly founded “open access” journals, the *Journal of Laboratory Medicine* looks back on a long history and is accepted as a serious journal published by a well-recognized publishing house. It has nothing to do with the so-called “predatory journals”, whose articles often do not undergo any proper peer review. These journals send out unsolicited, bizarre e-mails to Editorial Board Members and other scientists requesting articles, often on topics, which with the recipients are completely unrelated, and charge particularly high publication fees.

So far, publication costs of the *Journal of Laboratory Medicine* were covered by subscription fees, either online only, print or print and online. With the change to Open Access, the publication costs are partially funded by an unrestricted education grant provided by the German Society DGKL and partially covered by article-processing charges (APCs) paid by the authors. Authors or their institutions will be charged only after acceptance of their articles, i.e. after rigorous peer review and, as in most cases, revision(s).

APCs for DGKL members and members of the Austrian Society of Laboratory Medicine and Clinical Chemistry (ÖGLMKC), which is affiliated with the Journal, are 250.00 €. Unsolicited manuscripts from all other authors are charged with 750.00 €. All invited articles are free of charge, both for DGKL and ÖGLMKC members and for all other authors.

Libraries will be further offered hard copies for their library collections at institutional subscription rates.

The decision to continue the *Journal of Laboratory Medicine* as an Open Access journal was made in light of the changing publication landscape resulting in new

challenges and the need to switch to new publication models, and last but not least to give young scientists the opportunity to present their scientific work to a broad international audience.

Correspondence: Prof. Emeritus Dr. Med. Peter Schuff-Werner, Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Laboratory Medicine, Berlin, Germany, E-Mail: labmed@dgkl.de. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9650-2843>
Heike Jahnke: Journal Editor, Journal of Laboratory Medicine for De Gruyter, Berlin, Germany