The new *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* in the everchanging publishing landscape

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To cite: Stamatakis E. The new *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* in the everchanging publishing landscape. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* 2019;5:e000603. doi:10.1136/bmjsem-2019-000603

Accepted 13 June 2019

BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine (*BMJ Open SEM*) is a young and credible open access (OA) journal that has constantly been growing since its inception in 2015. In its first 4 years, it has received submissions from 46 countries and it becomes more international year on year (figure 1). I feel both privileged and responsible to lead *BMJ Open SEM* through its maturation phase as its second Editor in Chief. As with most 'sister' OA journals, *BMJ Open SEM* has been a great destination for worthy sports and exercise manuscripts which, despite their good quality, cannot fit in the limited space of hybrid journals such as the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (*BJSM*). *BJSM* accepts only 6%–8% of original research papers and around 20% of systematic review submissions.

EXPANDED SCOPE

The ambition of the current phase of growth of *BMJ Open SEM* is to be a lot more than a destination for manuscripts that 'cascade' from *BJSM* and possibly other similar journals. The 'new *BMJ Open SEM*' has an expanded scope to cover a range of themes beyond what *BJSM* usually prioritises and publishes and our new editorial board is prepared to meet the high bar set by our publishers and provide high

quality and swift review on manuscripts from diverse areas. This OA journal aims to publish papers ranging from exercise medicine and physiology and physical activity/sedentary behaviour for chronic disease prevention, to physiotherapy and epidemiology. Measurement development and evaluation relevant to sports, physical activity and exercise are also welcome, as well as good quality nutrition research relevant to sports and exercise. Needless to say, *BMJ Open SEM's* foundation commitment¹ to publishing clinically relevant research that helps physiotherapists/physical therapists, physicians, sports therapists, and sport rehabilitators and coaches remains intact. *BMJ Open SEM's* strong connection with *BJSM* (where I also serve as an Editor) offers *BMJ Open SEM* an unparalleled advantage in terms of access to high-level expertise and quality peer reviewers.

NEW MANUSCRIPT TYPES

The new *BMJ Open SEM's* ambition is to be a platform for open discussion, debate and flexible research dissemination. Towards this end, and in addition to original research full papers, reviews and consensus statements, we have created two new article types: Viewpoint and Short Research Report (both up to 1500 words—both come with a lower article processing charge (APC) than full-length papers).

The scope of Viewpoint submissions is to discuss a clinically, methodologically or public health relevant topic that will likely ignite discussion and provoke thinking in the field. The main purpose of Short Research Report submissions is to provide concise description of small pilot and proof-of-concept studies that will provide useful direction for scaling up to fully powered research endeavours. I take this chance to remind those of you who belong to one of the *BJSM's* 26 member societies² that you are given a discount on APCs at *BMJ Open SEM*.

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Figure 1 *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* papers submitted from different parts of the world.

CALL FOR SPECIAL ISSUES PROPOSALS

To cement *BMJ Open SEM*'s position as the leading sports and exercise OA journal that promotes novel ideas and constructive debate, we welcome proposals for special issues comprising 4–6 manuscripts on a focused theme relevant to *BMJ Open SEM*'s scope. Authors of approved special issues will receive a 50%–100% waiver on the APC for all special issue papers. To submit a special issue proposal please e-mail info.bmjsem@bmj.com with an (up to) 500-word description of the proposed theme and its significance/appeal for clinicians and/or researchers, the curriculum vitae of the proposed Guest Editor(s), and the working titles and authors list of 4–6 proposed papers (of which at least 3–4 should be systematic reviews or original articles).

EMBRACING CHANGE

Scientific publishing has been changing rapidly for the last 15–20 years. One of the most recent drivers of change to come is the announcement of Plan-S. From January 2021, researchers funded by a consortium of major European and UK funding councils, as well as some US funders, will be contracted to publish in pure OA journals. Hybrid journals (subscription plus option for paid OA, such as *BjSM*) will *not* be Plan-S compliant.³ Plan-S is yet another reason why quality peer review and efficient article processing efficiency have never been more important for OA journals. Aligned with the publishers' values, *BMJ Open SEM* embraces change. We encourage the use of the medRxiv preprint service recently launched by *BMJ*⁴ in collaboration with Yale University and Cold Spring Harbour Laboratories. Preprints—preliminary

versions of research articles—offer prospective *BMJ Open SEM* authors a great opportunity for feedback from a wider group of readers, such as clinicians, coaches and members of the public, alongside formal peer review by experts. Preprints can greatly contribute to better quality formal submissions and are a win-win for authors, editors and journals alike.

It is my great privilege to work with the publisher, *BMJ*, to steer *BMJ Open SEM* towards higher impact during these both challenging and exciting times for scientific publishing.

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Funding This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing interests None declared.

Patient consent for publication Not required.

Ethics approval N/A

Provenance and peer review Commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

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