

## Point of view / Point de vue

### European physical and rehabilitation medicine journals in concert: A European Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ESPRM) initiative<sup>☆</sup>

#### Les revues européennes de médecine physique et de réadaptation en harmonie : une initiative de l'ESPRM

#### 1. English version

Scientific societies, conferences and journals are instrumental in the development of scientific fields. They bring scientists together and foster the formation of a common identity. They provide scientists with a forum for the exchange of their research and clinicians with access to research evidence. Without them, the structured global exchange of valuable arguments and standards in the scientific discourse would be impossible [1]. Journals in particular have an important role in the dissemination of research. The publication and discussion of the results of scientific studies is essential in promoting the research process in the direction of a constant approximation of truth in the scientific community and the stimulation of new research questions. Through the breadth and depth of the publications, journals also importantly contribute to a common understanding of a scientific field or “field of competence”. In doing so, the visibility of the scientific field from outside is enhanced and identification from inside the field is facilitated [1].

With respect to their common goal, to develop and maintain a distinct scientific field, societies, journals and conferences are mutually dependent. Therefore, a society must decide whether and how it will collaborate with journals of most relevance for its constituency. The European Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ESPRM) has thus started an initiative to formalize its relationship with European journals who share its vision, to strengthen the field of physical and rehabilitation medicine (PRM) within Europe and internationally. ESPRM is envisioning a “web” of journals which collaborate in concert.

Through this initiative ESPRM does by no means intend to interfere with the highly competitive scientific publication process of “original work”. Researchers will and should publish their research in the most suitable journal irrespective of a particular journal’s collaboration with scientific societies such as ESPRM or the International Society of Physical and

Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM). ESPRM does however hope that the envisioned web will contribute to the strengthening of the journals in such a way that they become scientifically more competitive and will in the future attract an increasing number of the best papers.

With the envisioned web ESPRM also aims to facilitate the publication of papers which are considered not primarily “scientific” but which are essential for the development of its field of competence. Papers of immediate relevance for the development of the field of competence include guidelines and standards developed in collaboration with ISPRM, ESPRM or national PRM societies. The same holds true for educational articles which must find an appropriate forum on the international, European, language area or national level. The envisioned web is also intended to facilitate the publication of articles which are of primary relevance for a region, language or regional area or a country and which are generally of limited interest to international journals. Examples are papers on rehabilitation and health services provision as well as case studies on rehabilitation care in the context of national health care systems. Other examples are language validations of measurement instruments which are typically of interest and relevance to a national or language area but not necessarily to an international readership.

There are numerous journals of potential relevance for the field of PRM [1]. The reasons for this are the highly interdisciplinary orientation of rehabilitation and the wide variety of human functioning and rehabilitation research ranging “from the cell to society” [2,3]. Similar to clinicians and scientists who may find it difficult to identify the journals of most relevance to their research and practice, ESPRM was faced with the challenge to identify and select the journals with which a formalized collaboration will contribute to the development and the visibility of its field of competence.

In this paper we first review recent developments of European and international journals and analyze the journal landscape relevant for the ESPRM initiative. We then present the criteria for the ESPRM initiative and the current state of the ESPRM initiative.

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### 1.1. Recent developments

Over the last years, we have witnessed important developments of Europe-based and international journals dedicated to PRM.

Two European journals, the *European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (EJPRM)* and the Germany-based journal *Physikalische Medizin, Rehabilitationsmedizin, Kurortmedizin* have been assigned an impact factor and are now cited in the relevant databases. They have therefore joined the group of internationally competitive European PRM journals.

*Europa Medicophysica* (the Latin title was selected as common ground for a number of European languages relevant to associated societies) evolved into the *EJPRM*. In line with its vision to serve as the foremost European journal in PRM it is now published in English only.

The Germany-based journal *Physikalische Medizin, Rehabilitationsmedizin, Kurortmedizin* has added the English subtitle, *Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine*, which will be used throughout this article. The Romania-based journal *Revista de Recuperare, Medicină Fizică și Balneologie* has given up its Romanian title and now uses only the English title *Romanian Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine*. The Croatia-based journal *Fizikalna i Rehabilitacijska Medicina*, the France-based journal *Annales de Réadaptation et de Médecine Physique* and the Portugal-based journal *Medicina Física e Reabilitação* have expressed their intention to add an English subtitle. It is envisioned that the Croatia-, France- and Portugal-based journals will follow the example of the Germany- and Romania-based journals with respect to the use of the internationally agreed name of the specialty, PRM, for their English subtitles while maintaining their original titles. The Croatia-, France-, Germany-, Portugal- and Romania-based journals now all allow for articles to be published in English as well as in their national languages. In the latter situation access for international readers is facilitated by an English abstract.

From the international perspective there are two important developments relevant for ESPRM.

While *Disability and Rehabilitation*, a multidisciplinary rather than a specialty journal, served as official journal of ISPRM from 2001 to 2008, the *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine (JRM)* which became an official journal of ISPRM in 2006 is now ISPRM's only official journal. In this context, it is

important to recall that “rehabilitation medicine” is the official name of the medical specialty PRM in Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom [4,5] and that *JRM* is a journal dedicated to the medical specialty PRM.

The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPMR), the largest society for PRM in Northern America, has in 2007 ended its collaboration with the *Archives of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine*, a multidisciplinary journal edited in collaboration with the multidisciplinary American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. It is now starting *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R)*, a journal dedicated to the field of PRM with the mission to strengthen the specialty PRM.

### 1.2. Analyses of the PRM journal landscape

Recently, there have been two analyses of the journals of primary relevance for the medical specialty PRM. A first analysis by Franchignoni et al. cited in a letter to *JRM* [6] identified the most relevant journals from the perspective of academic promotion. It provided a list of journals divided in two categories as shown in Table 1. An analysis by Reinhardt et al. identified journals in the area of “human functioning and rehabilitation”. It then classified the journals with respect to their focus on distinct scientific fields as summarized in the paper on “Developing ‘human functioning and rehabilitation research’ from the comprehensive perspective” [6] and is reprinted with permission of *JRM* in this issue of *EJPRM*.

Since the analysis by Franchignoni et al., *EJPRM* and the *Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine* now have an impact factor and are cited in relevant journal databases. They may thus now qualify to be classified under category 1.

Not identified in the analysis by Reinhardt et al. and not classified as either category 1 or 2 in the analysis by Franchignoni were the Croatia-based journal *Fizikalna i Rehabilitacijska Medicina*, the Portugal-based journal *Medicina Física e Reabilitação*, and the *Romanian Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine* which have expressed their intention to add an English subtitle. All those journals may thus in the future qualify under category 2 in the classification of Franchignoni et al.

The Europe-based journals *Disability and Rehabilitation* and the *International Journal Rehabilitation Research* are

Table 1  
Categorization of journals relevant for physical and rehabilitation medicine (PRM) according to their scientific impact [6].

Journals	
Category I	Category II
<i>American Journal of Physical Medicine &amp; Rehabilitation</i> (Am J Phys Med Rehabil)	<i>Annales de réadaptation et de médecine physique</i> (Ann Readapt Med Phys)
<i>Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation</i> (Arch Phys Med Rehabil)	<i>European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine</i> (formerly <i>Europa Medicophysica</i> ) (Eur J Phys Rehabil Med)
<i>Clinical Rehabilitation</i> (Clin Rehabil)	<i>Physikalische Medizin, Rehabilitationsmedizin und Kurortmedizin</i> (Phys Med Rehab Kuror)
<i>Disability and Rehabilitation</i> (Disabil Rehabil)	<i>International Journal Rehabilitation Research</i> (Int J Rehabil Res)
<i>Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine</i> (J Rehabil Med)	

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