

Editorial

An open-access journal focusing on basic and clinical research of digestive diseases: launch of American Journal of Digestive Disease

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Digestive diseases (DD) are a major health problem worldwide [1]. With increasing research activities in this field in the past years, the number of journals in the gastroenterology and hepatology category, as documented by the *Journal Citation Report*, has grown from 44 in 1999 to 74 in 2012, a 68% increase [2, 3]. Despite the expansion of the journal pool and explosion of articles in the field, however, DD remain an enormous burden to the healthcare system and society [4]. One of the major challenges is the gap between basic research and clinical application. *American Journal of Digestive Diseases (AJDD)*, an open-access journal dedicated to both basic and clinical research, aims to help close this gap. Our goal for the journal is to marry the basic and clinical research on DD in harmony.

We believe there is a strong need for a journal like *AJDD*, for at least two reasons. First, only a handful of journals publish both basic and clinical research articles on DD. Among the top 15 gastroenterology and hepatology journals indexed in *Journal Citation Report*, only four cover both subjects [2]. These journals attract many more impactful manuscripts concerning DD, particularly those focused on basic and translational research, than they can publish. Hence many impactful manuscripts were “drained” to the non-hepatology and gastroenterology journals. *AJDD* aims to become a platform for those “drained” manuscripts, and to synergize research in the gastroenterology and hepatology

field through cross-talk between basic and clinical sciences. We believe that readers will find this journal useful because it represents the naturally complementary relationship between the basic and clinical sciences. We hope that bench scientists will gain some insights into clinical studies that will help them better define their research directions, while the bedside researchers will be intrigued by the basic science discoveries and find ways to apply them effectively into clinical use. *AJDD* aims to smoothly and synergistically facilitate this process.

The second reason for creating this journal is that we and many others believe in open access to scientific publications for better public dissemination of knowledge [4-7]. This belief is supported by the great success of many open-access journals, including *PLOS Medicine*, *PLOS One*, and *eLife*, as well as our sister journals such as *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Pathology* and *American Journal of Translational Research*. In fact, the American Association for the Advancement of Science recently announced that it would launch its first online open-access journal, *Science Advances*, in addition to its renowned journal *Science*.

A major concern about open-access journals is the potential for poor manuscript quality control because of flawed review processes [8]. This concern, while valid, will be overcome by a rigor-

ous review process, a dedicated, high-caliber editorial board, and strict adherence to high publication standards. In fact, one of our sister journals was recently praised for its handling of a fabricated paper [8], thanks to its high publishing standards. Given the paucity of open-access journals on DD, *AJDD* will be a valuable addition to the field and to modern open-access scientific publishing. Therefore, we enthusiastically launch *AJDD*. We also sincerely invite you and your colleagues to read, comment on and contribute to *AJDD*.

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