



## EDITORIAL

# Passing the torch of the European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine after 18 years of work as Chief-Editor

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I feel the *European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine* (EJPRM) as one of my professional achievements. Hence, it is not easy to leave the post of Chief-Editor after more than 18 years of work, passion and love. Nevertheless, I felt the time had come, and I sent my resignation letter on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, effective from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The world has changed so much since that Spring of 2003, when Franco Franchignoni, one of the past Chief-Editors of the EJPRM, called on behalf of Alessandro Giustini, at that time President of SIMFER — the Italian Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM). I still remember where I was, sitting in my car along a pleasant tree-lined avenue, listening to his surprising words. “Could you be interested in running a Special Issue of the EJPRM? It will be an experiment to check if you could eventually become the new Chief-Editor. There is another candidate. Let’s see how it goes”. It went well for me, and hopefully for the journal, as well.

In this specific moment of memory, I would like to give a quick historical look at these years of incredible growth. In the end, when is the time to look back on an adventure, if not when you are closing? Nevertheless, it would burden the paper. I leave the key moments of growth of the journal to Table I,<sup>1-34</sup> with the thanks to the PRM Societies and

their Presidents that supported the journal (Table II). Most of all, there has been an extraordinary team working all these years, constituted by strong scientists who dedicated a lot of time and energy to the journal with the support of the Editorial Boards. My deepest thanks go to the Deputy, Associate and Assistant Editors, the Scientific Secretaries, the Statistical Advisors and finally all the Minerva Medica staff (Figure 1).

Back to the journal, then. The co-Chief-Editor of these last years, Giorgio Ferriero, is starting his solo adventure and guarantees the future of EJPRM. I will humbly continue to grant my support, together with Franco Franchignoni, as “Honorary Consulting Editor.” I feel that I am leaving a healthy journal at the top of its history, ready to grow even more in the new, capable hands. This year we reached the 4<sup>th</sup> position in the Web-of-Science (WoS) rehabilitation category. After the growth to 2.874 in 2021, we now have a “stellar” IF of 5.313, doubling the best of the past (2.246 in 2010). Since we entered WoS, we have always remained at the boundary between the first and second quartiles, and I am leaving now with what I believe could be a consolidated position in the first quartile. I would have never considered these achievements possible when I started in 2004. We were still called “*Europa*

TABLE I.—Timeline since 2004 of the cornerstones of the growth of the journal, the various initiative launched to strengthen Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) and evidence in the field. In bold, the most significant achievements.

| Year    | Development cornerstone  | Ref.       |
|---------|--|------------|
| 2004    | Launch of the electronic peer-review<br>Organisation of the paper's flow for peer review in three stages (Chief-Editor, Associate, reviewers)<br>Launch of the ejprm.org website<br>Start of a Methodology of research in PRM series of papers | 1          |
| 2005    | Indexation in <b>PubMed</b> with the abbreviation Eura Medicophys  | 2          |
| 2006    | Publication of the <b>European White Book on PRM</b> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition   | 3          |
|         | Start of the internal audit  | 4          |
| 2007    | Start of the e-pub and the <b>Free Full Text</b> option, our pioneering Open Acces (OA) option   | 5          |
| 2008    | Name change to <b>European Journal of PRM</b> and abbreviation to Eur J Phys Rehabil Med   | 6          |
|         | Launch of the Euro-American Rehabilitation Focus in collaboration with the American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation  | 7          |
|         | Launch of the section Narrative-based rehabilitation medicine  | 8          |
|         | Indexation by <b>Web of Science</b> (now Clarivate Analytics)  | 9          |
| 2010    | First <b>Impact Factor</b> (IF) 2.246  | 9          |
| 2011    | Start of a gradually increasing focus on evidence  | 10, 11     |
| 2011    | Attention to the evolution of PRM in Italy and the world   | 12, 13     |
| 2013    | Implementation of the <b>Reporting Guidelines</b> for all our papers   | 14         |
|         | The journal becomes the official publication of the <b>PRM Section of the European Union of Medical Specialists</b>  | 15         |
| 2014    | Celebration of the fifty years of our journal  | 16, 17     |
| 2015    | Discussion on the Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021  | 18         |
|         | Launch of the Historical section   | 19         |
|         | Action to favour the launch of a field of Cochrane in our area of expertise  | 20         |
| 2017-22 | Launch of and strong collaboration with <b>Cochrane Rehabilitation</b>   | 21-27      |
| 2021-22 | Strong support of the <b>World Health Organization "Rehabilitation 2030: a call for action"</b>  | 24, 28, 29 |
| 2019-22 | Contributions to the advance of methodologies in PRM   | 30, 31     |
| 2022    | Position against the war and in favour of the Human Rights   | 32         |
|         | Position on trustworthiness scales and role of trust vs truth in publications  | 33         |
|         | Launch of an initiative to globally unify the name of the Specialty and the Specialists in PRM   | 34         |

TABLE II.—Presidents of the Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) Societies that supported the European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (EJPRM) throughout these years.

| Society        | Italian Society  | Mediterranean Forum                                | European Society   | European Union of Medical Specialists | International Society  |
|----------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Abbreviation   | SIMFER   | MFPRM  | ESPRM  | UEMS-PRM Section                      | ISPRM  |
| EJPRM Position |  |  | Official Journal   |                                       | Published in association   |
| Presidents     | Giustini A<br>Gimigliano R<br>Fletzer D<br>Saraceni VM<br>Boldrini P<br>Fiore P<br>Beretta G | Christodoulou N<br>Lains J<br>Akyuz G<br>Lazovic M | Stam H (EFPMP)<br>Giustini A<br>Michail X<br>Delarque A<br>Christodoulou N | Christodoulou N<br>Zampolini M        | Stucki G<br>Imamura M<br>Li J<br>Lains J<br>Frontera W<br>Li L<br>Gimigliano F |

*Medicophysica*” due to the 1964 Latin compromise in the European fight for linguistic dominance between French and English. The journal was not in PubMed, and we were diffused mainly in Italy.

The editorial world has been dramatically changing in the last few years. EJPRM fought for Open Access (OA) since 2007 when very few believed in it, and now OA has almost imposed itself after the decisive push coming from the pandemic. OA is changing the editorial panorama and all the rules, and we need new blood to face these changes.

New publishers are born and behave in a different way than previous ones. The boundary between piracy and respectability has become very thin. Still, the reality is that these publishers are allowing the compressed science to explode because there are no longer limits due to paper printing. They earn from authors and push authors to produce — precisely the opposite of the past when authors pushed to publish, and publishers had to limit the printed papers. As usual in history, economic reasons due to technological improvements make changes unavoidable. Luckily, OA

|                  | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Ferriero G       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |      |      |      | AE   | ASE  |      |      | CE   |      |
| Ceravolo MG      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |      |      |      |      | DE   |      |
| Stucki G         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | DE   |      |
| Zampolini M      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | DE   |      |
| Boyer FC         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |
| Di Monaco M      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Escorpizo R      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   | ASE  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Franceschini M   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Ilieva E         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |
| Kaux JF          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |
| Oral A           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |
| Ozcakar L        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Paoloni M        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Paolucci S       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Ring H†          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Smania N         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Sterzi S         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Yavuzer G        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Zaina F          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ASE  |      |
| Bonaiuti D       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |
| Tesio L          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |
| Treger I         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |
| Weigl M          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | AE   |      |
| Baricich A       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |
| Barotsis N       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Carda S          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Ekiz T           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |
| Gimigliano F     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Monti cone M     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Moslavac S       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Picelli A        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Pinto S          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Sale P           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Santamato A      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Tederko P        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SS   |      |
| Arienti C        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SA   |
| Armijo-Olivo S   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SA   |
| Carabalona R     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SA   |
| Cordero-Garcia C |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SA   |
| Donzelli S       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SA   |
| Ricci C          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SA   |
| Villafane JH     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | SA   |

Figure 1.—A thankful table reporting all the many colleagues and friends who worked throughout these years in the development of the journal. With them, we particularly thank the Past Chief and Honorary Consulting Editor Franco Franchignoni for all his advices, as well as Alberto and Elena Oliaro, Paola Abrate and all the personnel at Edizioni Minerva Medica who worked with us over these years.  
 CE: Chief Editor; DE: Deputy Editor; ASE: Associate Editor; AE: Assistant Editor; SS: Scientific Secretary; SA: Statistical Advisor.

has an ethical value because these changes make science freely available, and governments support this movement.

Moreover, in the past, the fewer papers you published, the higher was the IF. Now the new OA publishers show the opposite precisely: they publish an incredibly high number of papers maintaining high IFs. This changing world constitutes a great challenge for traditional publishers like Minerva Medica and their journals, such as the EJPRM. We were innovators some years ago, and now we are on the conservative side of history. Only fresh ideas can face these challenges properly for the EJPRM.

Another issue is the increasing difficulty in finding reviewers, let alone good reviewers. In the run to publish not to perish, there is less availability for this service to the scientific community. It is not only a shame: it is an

ethical issue that researchers do not feel that providing good reviews is a duty toward the public and the growth of their discipline. Nevertheless, we know very well that ethics is not enough — we need motivation that can come only from introducing this parameter among others to judge the scientific standing of candidates for scientific posts. It is not enough that reviews performed are one of the (too many) titles within a curriculum vitae. Policymakers, judging commissions and funders should make them a specific topic. I would caution young colleagues on not performing reviews for two main reasons: 1) you learn so much while reviewing that it is a lost occasion when you do not help the community; and 2) the world will change, and at one point, something similar to what I am discussing here will become a reality.

Finally, allow me to give a short personal note. After years of dedication to the growth of science in the PRM specialty through the EJPRM, it is time for me to concentrate on research and teaching, that are my professional duties but also what I always liked doing together with clinics. I will do it mostly focusing on my true passions: Cochrane Rehabilitation and my main clinical interest. The first is a new fascinating adventure started in 2016, with an excellent international team significantly contributing to the growth of evidence in PRM: it is another, possibly more effective, way to serve the specialty and the field of rehabilitation at large. The second is the rehabilitation of children and adolescents with idiopathic scoliosis, an underserved clinical field that moved in the last years from orthopedic surgery to PRM. These patients and their families deserve my greatest clinical and scientific attention, and I want to serve them at my best.

Ad Majora!

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*Conflicts of interest.*—The author certifies that there is no conflict of interest with any financial organization regarding the material discussed in the manuscript.

*History.*—Manuscript accepted: February 8, 2023. - Manuscript received: February 3, 2023.

*(Cite this article as:* Negrini S. Passing the torch of the European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine after 18 years of work as Chief-Editor. *Eur J Phys Rehabil Med* 2023;59:1-5. DOI: 10.23736/S1973-9087.23.07911-X)