

Editorial to JHIA Vol 3 (2015) Issue 1

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This fourth issue of the *Journal of Health Informatics in Africa* (JHIA; ISSN/NLM abbreviation *J Health Inform Afr*) passes an important milestone in the life of an academic journal. With this issue, the JHIA has published altogether 32 double-blind peer-reviewed full research papers: 15 in 2013 in volume 1 issue 1, 4 in 2014;2(1), 10 in 2014;2(2), and 3 in this 2015;3(1).

It is important for authors and their institutions to publish their research in journals that are internationally acknowledged. In practice, journals are regarded acknowledged when they are indexed in one or more of the main scientific literature databases. In health-related fields, the most important literature database is MEDLINE, operated by the U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM).

To be considered for indexing by MEDLINE, all articles published in an electronic open-access journal like the JHIA must be available in a digital archive. The most feasible open-access archive for journals in health-related fields is the PubMed Central (PMC), also operated by the NLM.

PMC has certain scientific quality and technical criteria for electronic journals for being archived by it. One of the minimum criteria is that the publisher has at least a two-year history of quality scholarly publishing in the life sciences, with the minimum of 30 published articles. The JHIA has now fulfilled these minimum criteria, and is able to apply for digital archiving in PubMed Central. If or when the PMC's scientific quality and technical evaluation processes are completed successfully, the publisher of JHIA, Koegni-eHealth Innovation for Development e.V., can make an agreement with PMC and the full-text contents of JHIA will be archived with full global visibility, accessibility and stability. After that the JHIA will apply for becoming indexed by MEDLINE.

The current issue contains three full papers. Common to all of them is that they report scientific research conducted in the scientific field of Health Informatics on empirical cases in Africa, by African researchers, most of whom affiliated in African institutions. No other journal in the world has such a focus. Each one of the three papers, however, has quite different a methodological approach and comes from different areas of the continent. The paper by Caroline Ngoma and Faraja T. Igira is a qualitative analytical study among community health workers in maternal and child health in Tanzania. Eustache Muteba Ayumba's paper has a software engineering approach and deals with medical decision support in malaria diagnosis and treatment in D.R. Congo. The third paper, by Gebrehiwot Yehualashet, Mulusew Andualem and Binyam Tilahun, is a quantitative questionnaire study on the attitude towards and use of an Electronic Medical Record system at a hospital in Ethiopia. The papers thus nicely cover qualitative, quantitative and constructive approaches as well as North-Eastern, Eastern and Central Africa.

The second issue of 2015 is under preparation and to be published around the end of the year. New submissions are welcome – if you submit soon and the reviewers do not require time-consuming modifications, your paper can still be published this year. The first issue of volume 4 in 2016 is scheduled to be published in the first half of next year, and it will also be an open-call issue (that is, based on individually submitted papers instead of a conference proceedings).

The current issue is also the last one for which I am the editor in charge. Dalenca Pottas is in charge of the next issue. As another sign of the journal becoming an established one, the publisher has invited Frank Verbeke and Nicky Mostert-Phipps, the Scientific Programme Co-Chairs of HELINA 2014, to join the editorial team. Ulrich Kemloch continues his invaluable work as technical editor.

Personally I wish to express my full-hearted gratitude to the team who have brought JHIA from an idea to the threshold of becoming an indexed, acknowledged and stable international scientific journal for the Health Informatics in Africa community. Particularly Ghislain, Dalenca and Ulrich – it has been a privilege to complete my academic life with you.

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