

EDITORIAL

2020: LOOKING OVER ONE'S SHOULDER?

<http://www.lebanesemedicaljournal.org/articles/68-3/editorial.pdf>

“When I attempt to find a simple formula for the period in which I grew up, prior to the First World War, I hope I convey its fullness by calling it the Golden Age of Security.” [1]

With this sentence of Stefan Zweig, I start my editorial for this third issue of 2020, a year known as *annus horribilis* for the world and especially for this country. Last year, like today, most Lebanese were happy-go-lucky, taking a vacation and enjoying the summer sun, ignoring that the worse was to come. We had board discussions on how to be edited by an international editor, secure funds, and make a brilliant resurrection of our Journal. Then the unthinkable happened.

October 17 changed the prospects of our future with no return. Adding to that, a few months later, CORONA – the leaven of our previous double issue – hit the country, paralyzing all subsequent efforts to straighten out the situation. Many colleagues will immigrate, depleting the country of intellectual and medical resources.

Instead, the editorial team has worked hard to continue via virtual meetings, trying to find a surrogate solution to overcome the crisis and preserve our Journal.

We decided, with the help of the Lebanese Order of Physicians (LOP) managing board, to put the creation of a new website out to tender among professionals. We selected the best offer with the best price corresponding to the desired criteria.

This website, actually under way, will be launched in December. It will allow the Journal to have a modern platform of submission, revision, and analysis. It will allow anyone to perform a search by item, word or sentence. It will be created by one of the best IT teams in Lebanon, coping with editorial manager programs seen in other international journals.

By doing so, we will be able to join the Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ) and become compliant with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommendations to be listed within their records.

We are in the phase of integrating COPE, which is a committee on publication ethics. This issue is essential, giving an ethical cover to our publications.

We implemented the use of the Turnitin® program in all our papers. We are proud to announce that all our articles accepted since this year are original

and certified by this program. This implements an essential difference with other journals published in the region, where such a program is not mandatory.

In the previous issues, we refused to review papers with a rate of similarity above 20% or other criteria, such as having more than 3% for the same article.

The editorial team is making a tremendous effort to cope with the “COPE” recommendations. We are happy to find that authors are complying and willing to review and/or change their paper. It is a question of culture we need to implement. “*The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*” [2]

Saying that, the previous double issue was a real success [3]. Everyone praised it. It addressed all facets of the COVID pandemic seen from the Lebanese angle. Many other papers on COVID are scheduled for publication in the forthcoming issue, showing the everlasting interest in this virus and its endless pandemic.

As said earlier, our future is shaped by what is happening today. Globally, there will be before and after October 17 for Lebanon and the COVID.

While recalling “*a very close era that danced brilliantly on the edge of extinction*” [1], we hope we are not facing a dark future without visibility, navigating on sight without prospects, forced to look over one’s shoulder to prevent failures.

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1. Zweig S. The world of yesterday: An autobiography. Lincoln, Neb; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.
2. Lao Tzu. The Complete Works of Lao Tzu: Tao Teh Ching & Hua Hu Ching by Lao Tzu, Hua-Ching Ni (Translator).
3. Seoud M, Atlallah D, Moughnieh R, Abiad F. Lebanon COVID-19 pandemic: A game changer. *Leb Med J* 2020; 68 (1-2): 2-3.