

The only constant in life is change: Summary of the last 4 years of *Advances in Clinical and Experimental Medicine*

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Abstract

In the last 4 years, the journal *Advances in Clinical and Experimental Medicine* has made significant strides in adapting to changes in scientific publishing. It has maintained high levels of citations and submitted manuscripts, publishing a considerable number of articles ahead of print releases to minimize wait times. With a solid reputation and a growing base of over 7,000 reviewers, the journal upholds rigorous ethical standards and thorough statistical verification for all manuscripts. Bibliometric indicators showcase the impact of *Adv Clin Exp Med*, including an increased impact factor, CiteScore, Index Copernicus Value (ICV) and recognition in indexes and databases like Scopus and PubMed Central (PMC). International cooperation support for early-career researchers are key focuses, with efforts to provide guidelines, online meetings, and social media promotion. Various materials for authors prepared by the editorial staff are discussed, including detailed instructions for authors, tips regarding graphical abstracts and choosing a checklist, as well as ethical guidelines, a brochure on the rules of statistical analysis and data presentation, and technical requirements for figures. The journal also emphasizes data sharing, detailed procedures for errata and retractions, and clear policies concerning the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Calls for submissions show authors the optimal direction for creating original, innovative scientific papers. Financing from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education ensures the financial stability of the journal. By adapting to the evolving landscape of scientific communication, *Adv Clin Exp Med* remains dedicated to facilitating open access publishing and disseminating high-quality medical research to its readers.

Key words: scientific journal, bibliometrics, research ethics, early-career researchers, ahead of print.

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Introduction

It has been 4 years since *Advances in Clinical and Experimental Medicine* (*Adv Clin Exp Med*) entered a new phase of its development. Since its foundation in 1992, successive editors-in-chief, section editors and the editorial staff have consistently contributed to building the journal's reputation (with an impact factor obtained in 2009 and inclusion in Scopus since 2001). Over the past 4 years, the journal has focused on:

- 1) keeping pace with standards set by international bodies and leading journals in the medical field;
- 2) making *Adv Clin Exp Med* more author-friendly by offering precise guidance concerning our requirements, submission process, research ethics, and other issues;
- 3) publishing as many papers as possible ahead of print releases in order to shorten the wait time for publication.

Constant changes in scientific publishing also mean that authors' reasons for choosing journals to submit their work to may vary, and editors should not assume that the popularity of their journals is guaranteed and constant, as Seiber¹ outlined. The increasing popularity of preprints^{2–4} and the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) tools⁵ are other examples of the deep reshaping of the scientific communication landscape observed in recent years. Scientific journals lose their importance in some aspects while remaining paramount for appropriate scholarly communication in others.⁶ Similar to the “publish or perish” rule, editors of scientific journals must understand that “change or perish” should be their motto in this era of acceleration in all fields, areas and dimensions. The present summary of *Adv Clin Exp Med*'s performance in the last 4 years proves that we successfully adapted to change and are ready and prepared for further development.

Reputation of *Adv Clin Exp Med*

Both the number of citations of published articles (Web of Science: 2021 – 2836, 2022 – 3137, 2023 – 3303) and the number of submitted manuscripts (817 submissions in 2021, 1146 in 2022, 972 in 2023, and already 848 by October 25, 2024) remain high. The rejection rate for 2021 was 82.38%, for 2022 – 80.58%, for 2023 – 80.24%, and for 2024 (until October 25) – 81.35%. In 2023, we published 230 articles – 150 in the 12 issues of 2023 and 80 from the 2024 issues as ahead of print (in 2022 – 195 articles – 146 in the 12 issues, and 49 from the 2023 issues as ahead of print). This means that on December 31, 2023, issue 12/2023 was published (the issue for a given month is published on the last day of that month), but a large number of articles from issues 1–8/2024 were already available ahead of print releases at that time. From January 1 to October 25, 2024, we published 101 articles in issues 1–9/2024, and as of October 25, 2024, 91 articles from further issues (up to and including 11/2025) were available ahead of print.

Our reviewer base includes more than 7,000 researchers and continues to grow. We set high ethical requirements for reviewers (working in double-blind review mode), as formulated in the guidelines available on our website.

A survey conducted in 2020 by Hardwicke and Goodman⁷ among editors of 107 across 57 scientific fields showed that 34% (36/107) rarely or never use specialized statistical review, 34% (36/107) used it for 10–50% of their articles and 23% used it for all articles. These numbers have changed little since 1998, despite the dramatically increased concern about research validity, underscoring the continuing importance of thorough statistical verification for all peer-reviewed manuscripts. The statisticians working in the Centre for Statistical Analysis of Wrocław Medical University assess the use of statistical tools in submitted papers. At the same time, editors of English-language publications employed by the journal are responsible for editing the content of articles. Although there are voices, like the commentary by Zhou,⁸ which emphasize the importance of papers in languages other than English, the latter will remain the language of global scientific communication for decades. Its widespread use does not mean the editors should relax their standards regarding language correctness. We have also developed formalized procedures for errata, retractions (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/complaints-corrections-retractions>) and appeals against the section editors' decisions (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/appeals>). Retraction rules are particularly important in light of the rising number of retracted papers in scientific journals – only in 2023, more than 10,000 scientific papers were retracted.⁹ In 2009, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) published its retraction guidelines^{10,11}; clear retraction procedures are therefore necessary and obvious.

Bibliometric indicators

In 2010, the journal achieved an impact factor (IF), which stands at 2.1; the 5-year impact factor is 2.2, while the Journal Citation Indicator (JCI) value for *Adv Clin Exp Med* in 2023 has increased to 0.4. This indicator considers differences between scientific fields, document types, and years of publication and provides an authoritative assessment of a journal's impact on global science. In 2024, *Adv Clin Exp Med* moved from Q4 to Q3 in the Medicine, Research & Experimental category within the Journal Citation Reports provided by Clarivate Analytics (London, UK).

Additionally, the Scopus database shows a steady increase in the Scopus CiteScore from 3.0 for 2021 to 3.4 for 2022 and 3.7 for 2023 (CiteScore Tracker is 4.1 as of December 2024). According to Scopus CiteScore, the journal is in Q1 in the Reviews and References (medical) category, and in Q2 in Medicine (miscellaneous), Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology category.

This year's evaluation score by Index Copernicus International (ICI) database is 171.00 (the journal is on the ICI Journals Master List).

Indexes and databases

The journal is indexed in PubMed/MEDLINE, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), Scopus, Embase/Excerpta Medica and CrossRef, and in the CLOCKSS dark archive, among others (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/indexation-and-statistics>). In March 2024, we successfully completed the qualification process for the PubMed Central (PMC) database and are depositing all articles from the issues published in 2023 and 2024.

As of 2023, we have also been tracking the resonance of our publications in lay media (press, news outlets) and social media using the Altmetric provided by Digital Science (London, UK), and metrics reflecting mentions of our articles are available on our website – both for individual articles and for the journal as a whole (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/altmetrics>). Williams¹² provided a substantive review and evaluation of altmetrics for academics to consider when adopting, utilizing and researching these tools.

International cooperation

We have patronized 13 conferences organized by global and European scientific societies, and published 9 books of abstracts from these events as special issues of the journal (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/special-issues>).

The Scientific Committee and Editorial Board members are award-winning researchers of various specialties from all over the world – their reputation is highlighted by a high Hirsch index. The expansion of the Scientific Committee to include researchers from the Far East and Latin America is due to Clarivate's guidelines and the fact that many of the authors publishing in our journal come from these regions of the world.

Collaboration with authors and support for early-career researchers

We offer the authors (particularly early-career researchers) a wide range of materials prepared by our editors to facilitate publication. *Advances in Clinical and Experimental Medicine* is often the first journal in which they publish their work. To better suit their needs, we have introduced a research letter category of papers. As Kukafka et al.¹³ have put it, this article type is optimal for presenting new, early, or sometimes preliminary research findings.

We regularly organize online meetings with authors, which occur monthly via GoogleMeet. Our social media – Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, BlueSky, and X (formerly Twitter) – are platforms for promoting publications and

communicating with the scientific community. At least 1 post is published daily on each of these sites. The role of disseminating publication via social media by scientific journals themselves was analyzed, among others, by Özkent¹⁴, Lopez et al.¹⁵ and Pandey et al.¹⁶

We are also updating our instructions for authors to be as precise as possible, based on best practices from well-established journals known for their high standards (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/instructions-for-authors>). The issue of clear guidelines on formatting the submitted manuscripts was discussed, i.e., by Iwaz,¹⁷ who emphasized the importance of regular and accurate revisions of journals' instructions to ensure consistency, conciseness and specificity, as well as of matching essential instructions from journals with simple requirements from submission systems.

Since March 2023, attaching graphical abstracts to submitted papers has been mandatory to enhance the possibilities of promoting the publication – both through our website and on social media. We have developed detailed guidelines on how to prepare such an abstract (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/graphical-abstracts>). The benefits of employing graphical abstracts in scientific publications were discussed by Klaassen et al.¹⁸ (on the example of urology journals), Chapman et al.¹⁹ (in surgical journals) and Stahl-Timmins et al.²⁰ (in *BMJ*).

As of August 15, 2024, we also have made it mandatory to share the data underlying the analyses presented in an article (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/data-sharing>). It is worth mentioning that such a requirement can also benefit the authors in the long run, as presented by Popkin²¹ and particularly by Christensen et al.,²² who showed the impact of data sharing on article citations.

There is also a clear policy in *Adv Clin Exp Med* on using AI tools by authors: <https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/ai-usage>. Such a policy is still rare among Polish and foreign journals. Since the potential of AI usage in research and scientific writing is dynamically rising, as recently outlined by Khalifa and Albadawy,²³ employing such tools should not be banned outright, but rationally regulated.

Based on our experience, we have also prepared other materials for authors:

- tips on the selection of a checklist – a tool to ensure the proper structure and layout of the article²⁴;
- updated guidelines for the analysis and presentation of statistical data (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/source/ACEM%20Statistical%20guidelines%202024.pdf>);
- guidelines for early-career researchers on the principles of developing scientific papers ([https://advances.umw.edu.pl/upload/files/ACEM_toolbox_www\(1\).pdf](https://advances.umw.edu.pl/upload/files/ACEM_toolbox_www(1).pdf));
- detailed presentation of technical requirements regarding figures (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/source/ACEM%20Figures%20technical%20requirements%202024.pdf>);
- an outline of preprints as means of scientific communication.²⁵

The requirements and procedures for publishing ethics follow the guidelines of the COPE, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and Clarivate Analytics (our editors learned them during online training – we make sure to provide regular training for the editorial team).

Section editors manage calls for submissions – initiatives designed to encourage specialists in specific fields to submit submissions on specific research areas. These submissions undergo standard peer review, but have priority in publication as ahead of print papers (<https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/calls-for-submissions/>). Calls for submissions are designed to support authors by helping them focus on the latest trends in experimental and clinical research and to guide them in the optimal direction to write original, innovative scientific papers.

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Summary

Many authors offer varying predictions and ideas concerning the future of scientific publishing – some are rather radical, like in the opinion piece of Habibzadeh,²⁶ who envisions that in near future, a universal AI-based system with ready access to a collective database will be formed to analyze the gigantic amount of data being created; consequently, there will be no ready articles, no scientific journals, no indexing system, no peer review, no research or publication ethics concerns, and no editors. Others argue that the changes will be less dramatic, e.g., there will be no journals, but only a stream of articles disseminated by larger entities (which is nothing new – Brown et al.²⁷ already in 1967 prophesied the twilight of scientific journals). As the editors of *Adv Clin Exp Med*, we are dedicated to providing – as long as needed – a platform for open-access publication for the authors and top-quality scientific content covering all fields of medicine for the readers.

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