



Elsevier Foundation Researchers Without Borders

(Rwanda Journal Series F: Medicine and Health Science)

Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences

Kigali / Butare, Rwanda, 10 January to 1 February 2018



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1. Introduction

After Juliana Trajano and Daniel Staemmler (who completed two visits), I was the third Publisher to visit the University of Rwanda (UR) to work together with the local journal office on the *Rwanda Journal Series F: Medicine and Health Sciences*. The objective of this visit was to build upon the work done by my predecessors and to further improve the workflows for journal. I also wanted to establish a timeline for indexing the journal in DOAJ, PubMed and Scopus together with the Editors, develop a strategic plan for the next years and conduct a survey among authors who previously published in the journal.

As Daniel Staemmler wrote in his report:

The *Rwanda Journal Series F: Medicine and Health Sciences* (RJMHS) is a medical and health sciences journal published by the University of Rwanda (UR) and its College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS), a higher education institution which was formed through a merger of Rwanda's previously independent public higher education intuitions in 2013 ([Wikipedia](#)). The journal was launched as *Rwanda Journal of Health Sciences*, published by the former Kigali Health Institute, and was later merged to the Rwanda Journal Series F: Health Sciences, published by the former National University of Rwanda.

In 2016 RJMHS joint the [African Journal Partnership Program](#) (AJPP).¹

The University of Rwanda is the only state funded higher education institute in the country and has six colleges in a total of 12 campuses.²

The journal has to date published one issue in 2013, two issues in 2015, one issue in 2016 and 2017 (the second issue for 2017 is pending), and has the ambition to start regularly publishing three yearly issues plus one Special Issue of articles of PhD students of the College of Medicine and Health Sciences of the University of Rwanda.

In 2016 the journal was added to the AJPP and was teamed up with the British Medical Journal.

2. Journal Organization

Journal team

The journal is still run by the same team, out of the journal office located in the UR research center in the Remera campus:

- Prof. Dr. Jean Bosco Gahutu (jbgahutu@yahoo.com), acting EiC
- Prof. Dr. Kato Njunwa (njunwakato@gmail.com), (overseeing) EiC, responsible for the whole journal program of the UR
- Malachie Tuyiziere (malaschie@gmail.com), Assistant Editor

Malachie's responsibilities were recently re-organized and he can only spend 30% of his time on the journal. But a new person was hired to support the journal as administrative staff:

- **Emile Nisingizwe** (neas0077@gmail.com), Managing Editor.

¹ D.Staemmler, Trip report to Kigali,Rwanda for Researchers without borders / Elsevier Foundation, 2017 (unpublished).

² University website: <http://ur.ac.rw/?q=node/54#> (last accessed 29 Jan 2018).

During my stay, Emile was not yet fully trained in ScholarOne and didn't have access to the system and the plagiarism check software used (Turnitin), but it was agreed that he would be trained soon.



Emile Nisingizwe in front of the research center

Reorganization of the Rwanda Journal Series

During my stay, it was decided to re-organize the Rwanda Journal Series and to combine some of the existing journals into new titles with new names:

OLD TITLE	NEW TITLE
Rwanda Journal Series A: Arts and Humanities	Rwanda Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities and Business
Rwanda Journal Series B: Social Sciences	
Rwanda Journal Series G: Law	
Rwanda Journal H: Economics and Management	
Rwanda Journal Series C: Mathematical Sciences, Engineering and Technology	Rwanda Journal of Science, Engineering, Technology and Environment
Rwanda Journal Series D: Life Sciences and Natural Sciences	
Rwanda Journal of Agricultural Sciences	Rwanda Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences
Rwanda Journal Series F: Medicine & Health Sciences	Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences
Rwandan Journal of Education	Rwanda Journal of Education

<i>2017</i>	
Vol 2, No 2 (2017): Series A	
Vol 4, No 1 (2017): Series B	
Vol 4, No 1 (2017): Series F	
Vol 2, No 1 (2017): Series A	
<i>2016</i>	
Vol 3, No 1 (2016): Series F	
Vol 3, No 1 (2016): Series B	
Vol 1 (2016): Series D: Special Edition 2	
Vol 1 (2016): Series A	
Vol 1, No 1 (2016): Special Issue: Series D	
<i>2015</i>	
Vol 2, No 2 (2015): Series F	
Vol 2, No 1 (2015): Series F	
Vol 2 (2015): Series B	

As a consequence of the re-organization the journal content on the African Journals Online (AJOL) homepage needs to be reorganized, as the issues are currently being published chronologically across various series. These need to be re-arranged into thematic individual issues. I communicated the change together with the Editor-in-Chief with AJOL.

New ISSN numbers need to be requested for the new journal titles and the Editorial Office is starting with the process. The next issue of the Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences will already appear under the new title.

Rwanda Journal Series currently represented on AJOL in January 2018.³

3. Author and staff surveys

I proposed to the Journal team to conduct an author survey and they came up with the idea to also send out a survey to medical and health science staff of the UR.

The [results of the author survey](#) are not very conclusive as only 5 of the invited 83 authors have responded (even though 42 had opened the mail). This low response rate suggests that authors do not find the journal relevant and have no close attachment to the journal. Nevertheless, 3 of these 5 responded that they find the journal relevant for their field and the quality of the journal is rated as being high. Suggestions for improvement include reducing time to first decision, increase the number of issues and improve the guide for authors.

The [survey to health science staff](#) was much more conclusive with 40 responses of 250 invitations. The Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences ranks first in the journals consulted when conducting research (with The Lancet as second and BMJ third). While this result is good for the reputation of the Rwanda Journal, it is a bit concerning that the academic staff of UR ranks the local journal higher than the leading medical journals in the world, especially as 30% of respondents consult it less than once a year (even though approximately half of the respondents say that they consult it weekly/monthly, which is surprising for a journal that is published once or twice per year). The Rwanda Journal Series is well known to academic staff and the Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Science is known by 75% of respondents and the research published in the journal is generally seen as being relevant to the community and the quality is rated as above average. Half of the respondents say that they have previously submitted to the journal. The suggestions section makes clear that editorial times, visibility and frequency need improvement. There is also a need for more training/capacity building.

³ <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/rj/issue/archive> (accessed on 29 January 2018)

4. Editors' Meetings

Two meetings with Editorial Board members were organized while I stayed in Rwanda: one in Butare, attended by four Board Members and the journal office staff and one in Kigali, attended by the EiC, acting EiC, two Board Member and the journal office staff. During both meetings, the journal performance was discussed in great detail and a SWOT/TOWS analysis was conducted, that resulted in a [strategic plan](#).

The results of the SWOT/TOWS analysis of the Kigali meeting are shown below:

SWOT analysis results:

Internal	External
STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University supporting the journal (publications count for promotion)• Many good researchers at university• International conferences organized by university every year• Support staff available• ScholarOne + Turnitin	OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AJPP support• AJOL presence• BMJ support
WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visibility• Irregularity• Not the preferred journal of University staff to publish their best research• Journal not yet indexed in PubMed, WoS and Scopus• Journal lack of promotion• Journal website not available at the moment• Not enough print copies available	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not enough submissions of articles• Concerns about reputation of journal• Authors not comfortable with ScholarOne• Some authors don't have the bandwidth to work in ScholarOne

TOWS analysis results:

	Opportunities (external)	Threats (external)
Strengths (internal)	<p>SO – How can you use your strengths to take advantage of your opportunities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular communication with Researchers of Univ. • Start publishing Special Issues • Organize workshops to support authors • Establish a team of mentorship scheme for potential authors from the research center 	<p>ST – How can you take advantage of your strengths to avoid real and potential threats?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Reviewer system • Send submission instructions to authors • Incentivize UR authors to submit to the journal • Use internal staff to help publish regularly → indexing • Give journal copy to every external visitor, conference participant • Incentivize authors to include international authors to their articles
Weaknesses (internal)	<p>WO – How can you use your opportunities to overcome your weaknesses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for developing website available • Make more use of the BMJ resources (also for editorial office) 	<p>WT – How can you minimize your weaknesses to avoid threats?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve visibility to attract university staff. • Convince each Fulbright Scholar (and other visiting staff) to publish one article.

5. Strategic Advice

The results of the discussions and analysis lead to a strategic plan, for which I wrote the first draft and which can be found in the [Appendix](#). The main points to focus on are:

- Regular and increased frequency of publication
- Internationalization of authors and reviewers
- Increased visibility, especially online
- Improved author services
- Editorial excellence.

6. Capacity building activities

The focus of my stay in the AJPP program was on capacity building and I conducted 10 workshops within the three weeks in five cities in Rwanda and Kenya.



Capacity building for Rwanda Journal of Health and Medicine

1. Author workshop at Kigali campus, attended by 10 researchers



2. Authors workshop at Butare/Huye campus, attended by 10 researchers
3. Reviewer workshop / Editorial Board Meeting in Butare/Huye, attended by 8 researchers



4. Referee workshop at Kigali campus, attended by 8 researchers



Capacity building for the University of Rwanda

5. Writing seminar for nursing graduate students, attended by 15 researchers (organized by Pamela Meharry (pamelameharry@gmail.com), and visiting Fulbright Scholar [Holli DeVon](#) (UIC College of Nursing)
6. Author workshop for Master students of Nursing, organized by Rebecca White (greekbecky1@gmail.com), attended by 70 Master students
7. Author and Grand Writing workshop for Librarians, organized by the Head of the Library Robinah Namuleme (namulemerobinah@gmail.com), to whom I was introduced by the vice Chancellor of UR Philip Cotton, attended by 20 librarians



Capacity building for RSS in Kenya

8. Author workshop at [Egerton University](#), attended by 200 researchers
9. Author workshop at [Moi University](#), attended by 80 researchers
10. Author workshop at the [Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis](#), attended by 15 participants

7. Activities for Scientific African

Apart from my activities for the University of Rwanda and the Rwanda Journal for Medicine and Health Sciences, I seized the opportunity to have meetings with regards to launching the Pan-African interdisciplinary megajournal Scientific African. During two meetings with Youssef Travaly and Nathalie Munyampenda (communications) of AIMS/[Next Einstein Forum](#), we discussed the financial implications for NEF of starting the journal, possible funding partners, editorial policies of the journal, strategies to find an Editor-in-Chief, and the communications strategy of the journal. I also met Sarah Lawan from [SDG Center for Africa](#), who is currently preparing a memorandum of understanding with NEF with regards to a collaboration on sustainability research in Scientific African.

8. Conclusions

There is huge enthusiasm from the editorial team of the Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences to improve the journal and the strategy for the future seems to be clear. At the same time, the journal is currently struggling with some fundamental problems that need solving before next steps can be taken. I was able to address these problems and to create a full [action plan](#) to clear the

way for the future. It's vital, that execution of this plan begins before the next Elsevier delegate is sent to Kigali.

Capacity building should remain a focus of Researchers Without Borders activities as there are lots of requests for workshops and also a need within the local research community to learn more about the publishing process and publishing ethics. Judging from the positive feedback I received during my stay, researchers in Rwanda are very glad with the activities of the Elsevier Foundation for the University of Rwanda and for the Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences.

9. Advice to future Researchers Without Borders

Rwanda

Rwanda is a very welcoming, friendly, clean and beautiful country with fantastic, polite and slightly cautious people. You will encounter few beggars or people who try to sell you stuff. Kigali is said to be one of the safest cities in the world and I never felt threatened or in danger, even alone at night. In Kigali it's sometimes easy to forget that a many people in Rwanda struggle to get their full calorie intake per day. People try to dress as well as they can and neat looks and cleanness are very important.

Advance Planning and Meetings

The planning and meeting culture in Rwanda is unlike what we are used to. It is advisable to try to plan everything as far ahead as possible, but you will most likely not be very successful with that as invitations to meetings are usually only sent out a couple of days (1-3) in advance and people choose to go to the meetings that they find most important. Punctuality is also different to what we are used to: Many of my meetings/workshops started with a 90-120 minute delay and people were walking in and out of meetings continuously. Usually, the catering is very generous, with a tea, as well as a lunch break (I was told that this is necessary to make the meetings/workshops attractive for attendants).

Visa

A tourist visa is available upon arrival, but it's safer to pre-arrange it online here:

<https://irembo.gov.rw/rolportal/en/web/dgie/newhome>, which will also reduce the wait upon immigration. You receive a pdf that will be exchanged with the actual visa when you first enter the country. Keep your invitation letter and your yellow fever vaccination at hand. If you plan to also visit Uganda and/or Kenya, apply for the 3-month East African visa, but note that the trips to these countries need to be mentioned in the invitation letter as well. If you don't hear back from Irembo within one week, give them a call.

Hotels & Transport

There are many good hotels in Kigali, but luxury comes with a high price tag. I recommend to stay in the downtown district, where also the Presidential Palace as well as most of the embassies are located. It's the nicest and safest part of town. The best place is the Marriot, which charges USD 170 if you stay for more than 10 nights, but the Park Inn looks nice as well and seems to be more reasonably priced. The best option in my opinion is the [Urban hotel](#), that can also be booked through Concur and is USD 100 per night, if you stay longer, it's probably also possible to negotiate for a better rate – the rooftop restaurant is always worthwhile a visit. [Heaven](#) is an upmarket boutique hotel with a nice restaurant.

The journal office is at the [Remera campus](#) of the university, which is a 20-30 min. taxi ride away. On the way back, it's also possible to take a bus as the bus terminal is close to the university. You have

to buy a prepaid card comparable to an Oyster card or the Dutch OV card, the trip is about 270 Francs. If you take a taxi, it is recommendable to have a driver whom to contact when you need him. Mine is called Vincent and is easily approachable through WhatsApp +250 788 631 526. The trip to the university should be 6,000 Francs and to the airport not more than 15,000 Francs.

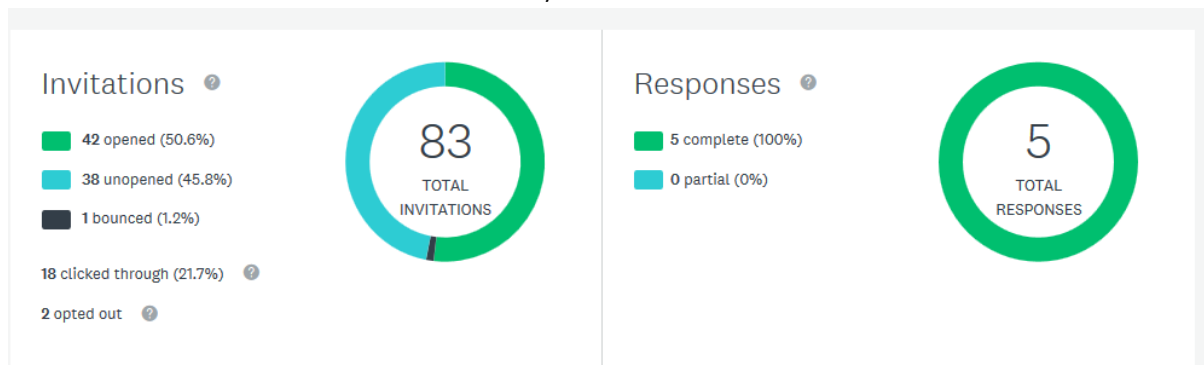
If you travel to other campuses (Butare/Huye), I suggest to take the bus, which is very safe and takes about 3 hours. I stayed at the Ibis hotel (not part of the chain!), which was fine and had a good restaurant.

Health

Even though Malaria is not very widely spread in Kigali and the locals don't use any protection except mosquito repellent, I didn't take the risk and took prophylactic medicine (even though I learned that the protection actually is only 50%). You will probably also need to update your vaccinations before you leave. While in Rwanda, you will hardly get sick. Food and water are safe (drink filtered water of course). Pharmacies have all kinds of medicine and you can get antibiotics etc. without prescription, but it's unlikely that you'll need anything.

10. Appendix

A1. Full Results of the Author Survey



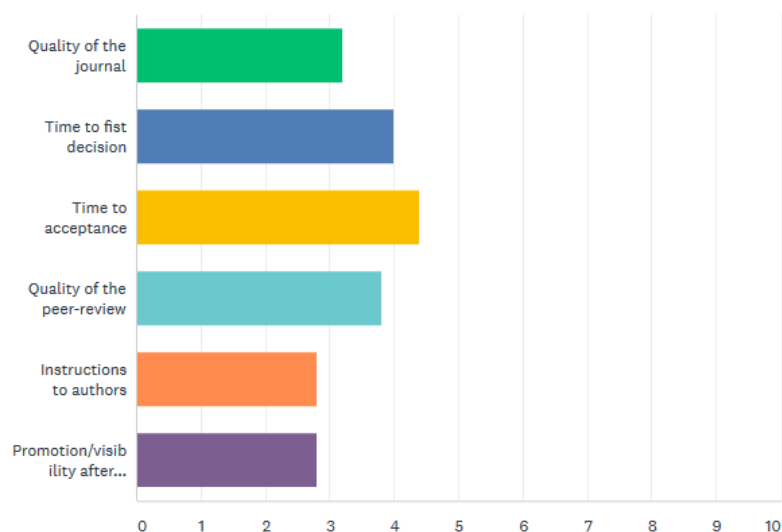
Q1: What were your reasons to submit your paper to the Rwanda Journal SERIES F: Medicine and Health Sciences (RJMHS)?

▼ I was invited by one of the Editors/Editorial Board Members	20.00%	1
▼ The likelihood of being accepted	0.00%	0
▼ Relevance of the journal to my field	60.00%	3
▼ The Journal's reputation	20.00%	1
▼ Availability in abstracting services	0.00%	0
▼ The Journal's readership	0.00%	0
▼ I wanted to publish in a journal from Rwanda	60.00%	3
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 5		

Q2: Was RJMHS your first choice of journal for your article?

▼ Yes	80.00%	4
▼ No	20.00%	1
Total Respondents: 5		

Q3: Based on your most recent experience, how would you rate RJMHS? [6=highest, 1-lowest, please rank]



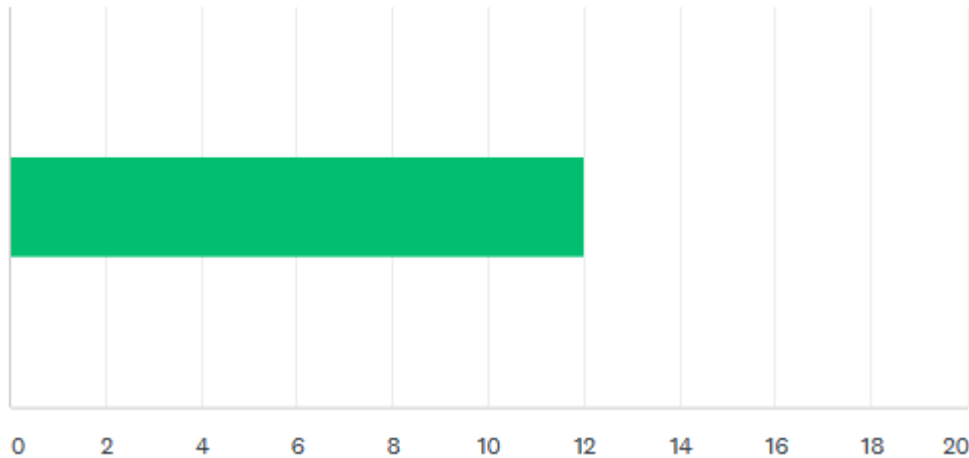
Q4: Based on your experience as an author would you submit another article in the future?

100% yes

Q5: What percentage of your colleagues consult the journal on a regular basis?

54 %

Q6: In general, how would you rate the relevance of papers to your clinical practice or medical research?



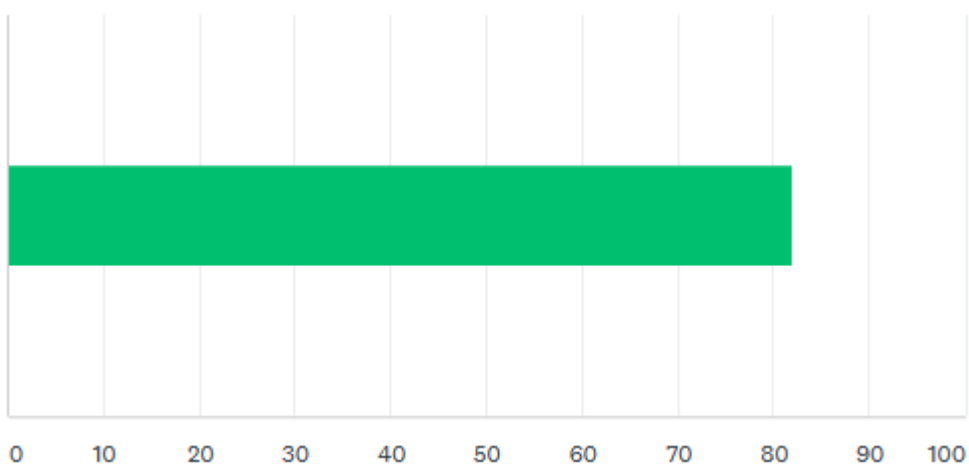
not relevant

very relevant

Q7: Has the relevance of the journal changed over the last few years?

▼ Yes	40.00%	2
▼ No	0.00%	0
▼ I don't know	60.00%	3
TOTAL		5

Q8: On a scale how would you rate the quality of the journal?



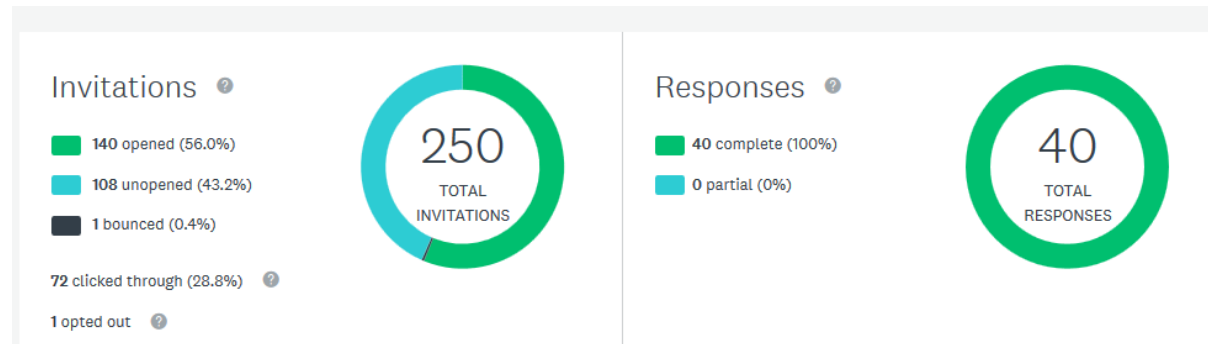
not relevant

very relevant

Q9: Please share your suggestions for improving the journal

- please make the instructions more clear
- Give feedback to submitter Increase number of volumes
- to stimulate Authors by paying few dollars and even support by grant giving for their research activities, and find them international research collaborators with high index.
- Time to first decision should be decreased

A2. Full Results of HMS Staff Survey



Q1: Which journals do you usually consult in order to conduct your research?

▼ New England Journal of Medicine	28.21%	11
▼ The Lancet	43.59%	17
▼ Journal of the American Medical Association	30.77%	12
▼ British Medical Journal	41.03%	16
▼ Rwanda Journal SERIES F: Medicine and Health Sciences	61.54%	24
▼ The Pan African Medical Journal	15.38%	6
▼ The South African Medical Journal	10.26%	4
▼ African Health Sciences	35.90%	14
▼ The East African Medical Journal	15.38%	6
▼ Other African Journals from African Journals Online (AJOL) - please specify below	25.64%	10
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 28.21%	11
Total Respondents: 39		

Other:

- pubmed
- Journal of anatomical sciences, journal of biomedical sciences and journal of physiological sciences
- International journal of physiotherapy
- BIOMEDCENTRAL JOURNAL OF NURSING
- American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
- Anesthesiology; Critical Care Medicine; American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine; Anaesthesia & Analgesia; Intensive Care; Hepatology; BMC Infectious Disease; PLoS ONE; British Journal of Anesthesia; Canadian Journal of Anesthesia; Annals of Internal Medicine
- Acta Clinica Belgica
- Infection control and public health

- International Journal of Stroke
- Focus on areas as list is too long: Toxicology, Medicinal Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Occupational Medicine,
- BMC

Q2: Do you know the Rwanda Journal Series, published by the University of Rwanda?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	82.05%	32
▼ No	17.95%	7
TOTAL		39

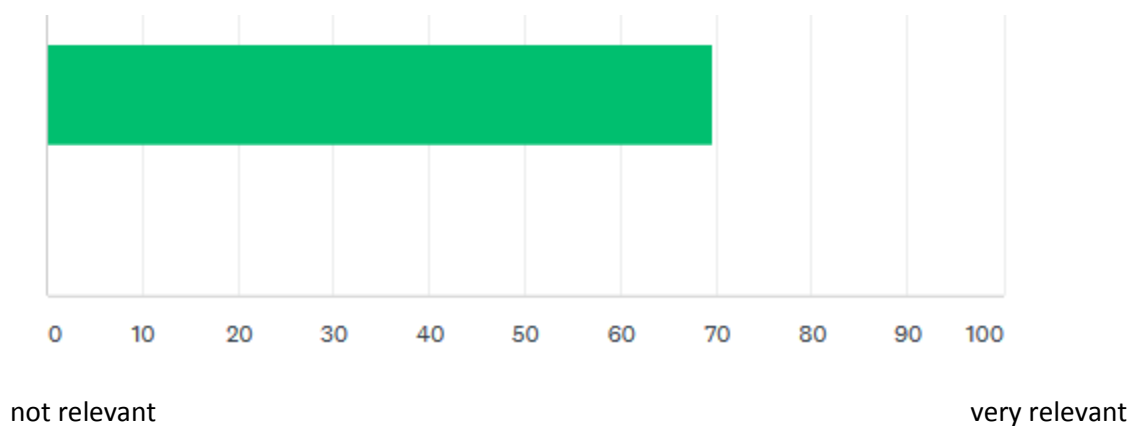
Q3: Do you know the Rwanda Journal SERIES F: Medicine and Health Sciences (RJMHS)?

▼ Yes	75.00%	30
▼ No (if answer is no, the survey ends here)	25.00%	10
TOTAL		40

Q4: How often do you consult the content of RJHMS?

▼ weekly	28.13%	9
▼ monthly	21.88%	7
▼ quarterly	12.50%	4
▼ every 6 months	6.25%	2
▼ yearly	0.00%	0
▼ less than once a year	31.25%	10
TOTAL		32

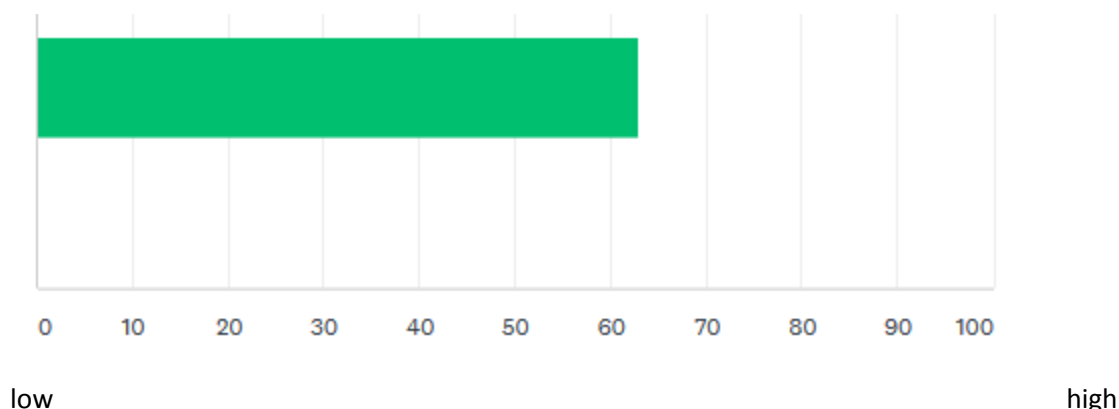
Q5: In general, how would you rate the relevance of papers to your clinical practice or medical research?



Q6: Has the relevance of the journal changed over the last few years?

▼ Yes	40.63%	13
▼ No	15.63%	5
▼ I don't know	43.75%	14
TOTAL		32

Q7: On a scale from 0 - 100 how would you rate the quality of the journal?



Q8: Have you ever submitted an article to RJHMS?

▼ Yes	50.00%	16
▼ No	50.00%	16
TOTAL		32

Q 9 Please share your suggestions for improving the journal with us

- Keep it up
- we need training on it
- regularity in publications and increase frequencies attract and motivate authors
- The journal must have more publication and must linked to other website in order to have more visitor (the people search data)
- This time the journal is taking a along time to give feedback. i suggest to review this time.
- Please improve your timeline for a manuscript to be published. Try to give feedback on time and as soon as possible.
- I encourage to continue the research
- There should be evident based researches and results from laboratory animals trials to bed sides applications.
- may you please fast track the review process. authors are willing to submit to the journal, however, they dont get responses within the promised period of time. Articles are taking at least one year to be responded to.
- we have the barrier of financial resources
- The time for feedback should not be long. The review process takes a long time
- The index should be improved
- To give a timely feedback and increase number of publications per year.
- Increase the times of publication at least monthly.
- To improve on indexation of AJOL to other international indexation bodies

- Change the editors on regular basis Identify a theme to be covered by the articles instead of mixing up everything Create a specific website of the journal visible to the large community
- Make available to and workshop to understand how it function
- There is a need to improve the the review process and provision of feedback from reviewers. In fact there is a delay in the review process.
- you can help people to be aware of all journal which is available espacialy in Rwanda
- Increase number of volumes at least quarterly Provide feedback at least to know the progress
- Include European reviewers
- I request them to work hard for more published papers/ Year
- Please keep the way you are up and think about impact factor.
- We need to encourage researchers to publish in this journal and reinforce peer review process. For a better visibility, we may avail scientific papers published by UR researchers but in other journals in the local one
- be rigorous in the review system to raise the standard of the paper. advertise the journal trough call for paper to potential reviewers
- Please avail as many as possible journals in these areas: Toxicology (Forensic, Analytical, Environmental, Genotoxicity etc), Medicinal Chemistry, Organic Synthesis, Occupational Medicine, Pharmacology, Drug Discovery, etc
- Have editors and reviewers of high caliber. Attract researchers within and out of CMHS to submit their papers to the journal.
- I personally do not know that journal,it needs to be activated.
- Improve on the time taken to review submitted articles

A3. Attendees of the Board Meeting in Kigali



A4. Results of the SWOT analysis made at the Butare campus:

Internal	External
<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal is operating continuously (?) • Tool available to find reviewers • Online submission system • Journal adapts to the changes of Univ. of Rwanda • Print copies sent to Rwandan University Libraries • International submissions from East African countries and USA 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal attracts international researchers • AJOL partnership • IJPP partnership • BMJ as mentor journal • Interest from international researchers in Journal content (anecdotal)
<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in publishing (irregularity) • Limited access to internet • Not enough training to editors • Lack of visibility of the journal (journal website) • Not enough submissions • Lack of training of staff (system) • Journal is too small • Reviewers don't receive feedback 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion (authors/reviewers) because of the journal transformation • Journal not indexed in PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus • Not enough activities for capacity building (funding) • Authors find it difficult to use the system • Journal reputation (not as high as international journal) • Journal lacks promotion

A5. Strategic Plan

Ambition

To make the *Rwanda Journal* one of the leading African academic journals in Medicine and Health Sciences within the next three years and have it indexed in Medline and Scopus by 2020 and in the Web of Science by 2022. In order to achieve those goals, the journal will continuously grow in content, move to a publishing schedule of four issues per year with at least 40% of the content published by authors not currently working at the University of Rwanda.

Strategy

1. Content Growth

The journal must become bigger in order to gain better visibility and to attract better and international authors. Before someone submits to a journal, they will check the current content, therefore growth of quality content has to be the central aim. The targets for publication are as below:

Year	Issue type	Publishing date	Nr. articles	Sum
2018	regular	1 April 2018	12	
	regular	1 August 2018	12	
	special	1 December 2018	24	48
2019	regular	1 March 2019	15	
	regular	1 June 2019	15	
	special	1 September 2019	30	
	regular	1 December 2019	15	75
2020	regular	1 March 2019	15	
	regular	1 June 2019	17	
	special	1 September 2019	40	
	regular	1 December 2019	17	89
2021	regular	1 March 2019	20	
	regular	1 June 2019	20	
	special	1 September 2019	50	
	regular	1 December 2019	20	110
2022	regular	1 March 2019	25	
	regular	1 June 2019	25	
	special	1 September 2019	60	
	regular	1 December 2019	25	135

Strategy

Promote the journal among Research Staff and visiting staff and incentivize them to publish in the journal. The Special Issue will consist of articles prepared by Master and PhD students from the College of Medicine and Health Sciences.

2. Internationalization

The journal has to become more international in order to get indexed by the major indexing bodies, but also to attract higher quality of research by other international authors.

Strategy

Convince all visiting scholars of the University of Rwanda (e.g. Fulbright Scholars) to publish one article in the Rwanda Journal. Implement the rule that each article published by a member of the University of Rwanda in the journal, needs to have at least one international co-author.

Timeline

Starting immediately. Checking upon compliance from Issue 2 of 2018.

3. Visibility

3.1. Journal Homepage

The journal (as well as the other journals of the University of Rwanda) needs more visibility in order to attract submissions – especially from international authors. The suggested structure of the website is as follows:

- Aims & Scope of the journal
- Journal ethics and peer-review statement
- Guide for authors with emphasis on ethical compliance
- List and short bio of editors
- Link to AJOL, but ideally also list of content with direct link to online article, either through University repository or AJOL
- Journal ambitions
- Journal statistics
- Possibility to submit directly to ScholarOne

Family of Journals “Rwanda Journals” should be placed on the website of the University under >Research >Publications. There, each university journal should have its own presence

In addition, each journal page should also be available through each individual college homepage.

Strategy

AJPP provided funds for the journal website, but I believe that this should be a university-wide initiative of which all RU journals will benefit, therefore some of the funding should be made available centrally. The websites of the five journals should be similar/uniform.

Timeline

28 February 2018:	Selection process for supplier completed and funds made available
31 March 2018:	Briefing for supplier prepared and first meeting completed
30 April 2018:	Test website completed and made available for testing period (2 weeks)
15 May 2018:	Website goes online

In the meantime, **the previous website that got lost during server transition needs to be made available again. Deadline: 15 February 2018.** The current situation is seriously harming the journal.

3.2. AJOL Homepage

The homepage of the Rwanda Journal Series on AJOP needs to be reorganized, reflecting the new journal titles and the separation into individual journals.

Timeline

The briefing has already been sent out and the job should be completed by 28 February 2018.

3.1. Offline Visibility

Beginning with issue 1 2018, the name change of the journal should be reflected online and offline and print copies of the journal should be produced and distributed again.

Strategy

Print each issue of the journal and distribute the print copies of the libraries of the individual UR campus libraries. Each visiting scholar and international conference attendee should receive a print copy of the journal (together with the request to contribute) upon arrival.

Timeline

Completed for first issue and strategy implemented by 1 April 2018.

4. Author Services

In order to make the journal attractive to authors, it should offer services to them. These additional services will improve the quality of the journal articles but will also help to stimulate to have authors return to the journal with future submissions.

Strategy

Offer additional services to authors that they will normally not receive from other journals.

- Authors struggling with ScholarOne receive specific instructions by the Editorial office. A call with the Editorial office can be arranged – or a visit if the author happens to visit the Remera campus.
- The College of Medicine and Health Sciences wants to establish a mentorship scheme for local authors that is staffed by team members. These mentors help authors to prepare their article and during the revision process.
- Organize workshops to support authors.
- Set a maximum time by which the author hears back from the journal (suggestion: 30 days) and stick to this rule.
- Conduct annual author satisfaction surveys.

Timeline

- ScholarOne instruction pdf prepared and approved by 28 February 2017.
- Mentorship team member appointed by 28 February 2017. Team meeting in which the purpose of the team and the procedures are defined before 30 March 2017. Continuous communication about mentorship team starting 1 April 2017.
- Author workshops conducted by the Editorial Board and Editors should be conducted on all campuses on a 6 monthly basis. Prepare schedule for workshops by 15 February 2018. Start first workshop in April 2018, first round of workshops completed by 30 June 2018.
- First author satisfaction survey sent out in January 2017. Presentation and analysis of results by 15 February 2018.

5. Editorial excellence

A journal can only be good if it is being run by an excellent editorial team and the Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences has the best capabilities to achieve these goals: A dedicated Editorial office with two (!) employees who work for the journal, an Acting Editor in Chief who is one of the best scientists of the country and a seasoned Editor in Chief who fully understands what is need for editorial excellence and who has the ambition to improve the journal. The journal is supported by AJPP and the BMJ and should take full advantage of this opportunities offered by the program.

Strategy

- In order to make the journal successful, the whole editorial team must feel comfortable using ScholarOne, the editorial system, the reviewer finding tool in ScholarOne and Clarivate as well as the software for plagiarism check.
- The Acting Editor has to **check ScholarOne for new manuscripts three times per week** (Mon, Wed, Fri) and send out invitations to reviewers **within one day**.
- The Editorial office needs to provide the best service to Editors possible, so that they can focus on the science. It's the Editorial office's responsibility to
 - check each incoming manuscript for plagiarism with Trunitin
 - conduct a Google search on the manuscript to detect previous publication in a predatory journal.
 - forward the manuscript to the Acting Editor in Chief within one working day
- The Editorial team (Acting Editor in Chief, and editorial office) establish a jour fixe every other week lasting at least one hour. If the jour fixe was skipped, it needs to be held within 7 days.
- Twice a year, the journal holds a (virtual) Editorial Board meeting. At this meeting, at least 50% of Editorial Board Members, 75% of Editors and 100% of Editorial office need to be present.
- The Acting Editor in Chief schedules catch-up calls with the Editorial office/Editor in Chief on BMJ every other month (jour fixe).

Timeline

- Malachie takes responsibility that Emile is fully trained and has full access to ScholarOne by 15 February 2018. Emile needs to be able to identify potential reviewers by 28 February 2018 (responsibility: Malachie).
- Emile takes care that Prof. Gahutu receives the official ScholarOne training workshop by 28 February 2018.
- Prof. Gahutu makes sure that Malachie and Emile receive training and access to Turnitin by 28 February 2018.
- The first jour fixe takes place in February 2018, by 28 February 2018, the schedule for the whole year is completed and shares.
- The first Board Meeting will be held before 31 July 2018. Invitations to the meeting are sent out 14 days in advance, reminders are sent 5 and 1 days in advance.
- First call with BMJ before 31 March 2018, by 28 February 2018, the scheme for the six calls in 2018 is arranged with BMJ.

What needs to happen immediately

A couple of things need to be fixed without delay:

- Request new ISSN number
- Publish Issue 2 of 2017
- Get the old journal homepage back online

Timeline:

Before 15 February.

Final Note

After having spent three weeks with the Journal, I understand how busy everybody involved is. However, in order to make the journal successful, a disciplined approach is necessary. It's not

enough to make plans, they also need to be executed. Each member in the journal team (Editor in Chief, Acting Editor in Chief, Journal Office) needs to fully understand and embrace their responsibilities and set away time to execution. The journal needs constant attention and all involved need to work on a nearly daily basis to work on it, in order to make it a successful and respected publication.

Marc Chahin, 29 January 2017