



Editorial

Passing the baton



Sports Medicine and Health Science (SMHS) has a short but impressive history. Following two diligent years of preplanning, SMHS was founded in 2019 by Co-Editors-in-Chief Dr. J. Larry Durstine and Dr. Quansheng Su. Dr. J. Larry Durstine is retiring from his position on December 31, 2025 and I am honored to accept the role of Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of SMHS along with Dr. Su. I want to begin my term as EIC by thanking Dr. J. Larry Durstine for his hard work and excellent editorial leadership during the first six years of journal operation. My job as the new EIC of SMHS will be to build on the already established excellence of the journal.

1. Building on excellence

As many readers of SMHS know, this journal is fully indexed with a current impact factor of 2.3 (2024). My goal for SMHS during the coming years is to increase the number of quality submissions to the journal and significantly elevate the journal impact factor to reach the first quartile of sports science journals. We are confident that SMHS has the editorial leadership team required to reach this goal. Specifically, let's discuss the primary factors that will assist SMHS in becoming one of the top sports medicine and science journals in the world.

International editorial board. SMHS was founded with an elite international editorial board. This proud tradition will continue and will be enhanced during my tenure as EIC. Notably, to provide continuity in leadership for SMHS, Dr. Quansheng Su of Chengdu Sport University (China) will remain as Co-EIC for the journal. Dr. Su is an outstanding researcher with significant experience with scientific journals. To provide additional editorial leadership, Dr. Zsolt Radák (Hungarian University of Sports Science, Hungary) and Dr. Li Li Ji (University of Minnesota, USA) will also remain as deputy EICs for the journal. Further, Dr. David Hood (York University, Canada) and Dr. Mari Carmen Gomez-Cabrera (University of Valencia, Spain) have also been recruited to serve as deputy EICs for the journal. Further, Dr. Lei Xi (USA) and Haydar Demirel (Türkiye) have been added as Associate Editors to expand editorial expertise and to increase the speed of peer review. Collectively, 28 members of the SMHS editorial board are currently ranked within the top 2% of scientists in the world (Ioannidis et al. Elsevier Data Repository, 2025). Few scientific journals can match this level of editorial excellence! Indeed, an outstanding editorial board is a requirement for a scientific journal to achieve academic excellence.

Open access and no charge for publishing. A major advantage of publishing your work in SMHS is that our journal is open access and remains free of charge for publication. Outstanding journals that are

both open access and without page charges are rare in today's world of publishing for profit.

Improving author experience. One of our goals going forward is to improve the author's experience during the submission and review of reports submitted to SMHS. Several steps will be taken to improve author experience. First, SMHS will adopt an editorial policy that the first submission of your paper is not required to strictly conform to journal style. This new policy (i.e., your paper-your way) will allow authors to submit a new paper in any format for peer review. Moreover, to further improve author experience with SMHS, the editorial board is working to reduce the time required for the first decision following submission of articles to the journal. Further, editorial changes are underway to ensure that accepted papers are rapidly posted online as "in press" and published as soon as possible following acceptance. Finally, original research articles that are likely to have high impact will be fast-tracked for rapid review and publication in the journal. This change in journal policy will ensure that reports with high impact will be reviewed and published with minimal time delay.

Active recruitment of high impact submissions. The editorial board of SMHS is committed to increasing the number of high quality submissions to the journal. This will be achieved by the editorial staff taking a proactive stance on recruiting contributions from outstanding scientists around the world. Specifically, the Co-EICs and the deputy EICs will attend major scientific conferences around the globe and serve as ambassadors for SMHS to recruit outstanding new contributions to the journal. Moreover, the editorial board of SMHS will use social media to actively promote the scientific content and visibility of the journal.

New directions and features for SMHS. Readers of the journal will also notice that the scope of papers published in SMHS will be refocused on three major areas of journal content:

1. **Sports Medicine**-prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports injuries using research-based practices from Western and Traditional Chinese Medicine.
2. **Exercise Biology**-Human and animal investigations on the impact that exercise and nutrition have on both cellular and organ system physiology. Further, studies that investigate the role that muscular exercise plays in the management of chronic diseases will also be encouraged.
3. **Impact of physical activity and inactivity on public health**-epidemiological or laboratory studies investigating the impact that physical activity and/or inactivity has on public health.

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Further, several new elements will be added to SMHS during 2026. First, a new feature on the journal website will named the “Editor's Choice” which will highlight high impact papers from each issue that are of particular interest. Notable, these outstanding papers will also be promoted via social media to expand the audience of readers of SMHS.

Again, you can submit your new manuscript to SMHS in any format. However, if the paper is deemed meritorious and reviewed, all revised manuscripts will be required to follow the SMHS journal formatting guidelines. To simplify this process for authors, the journal website providing instructions for authors have been streamlined to clearly convey the key elements of journal format. Further, SMHS will soon require published articles to include a graphical abstract to summarize the contents of an article in a concise, pictorial form to appeal to readers.

It is anticipated that the inclusion of a graphical abstract will increase both downloads and citations to published reports.

To summarize, SMHS is a journal on the rise and the SMHS editorial board will continue to work diligently to ensure that the journal remains on a steady course of publishing high impact reviews and the highest quality of original research. We look forward to receiving your future submission to the journal.

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