

Letters to the Editor are now welcome in *Pneumologia*.

Two types of Letters to the editor are welcome: correspondence and research letters. Correspondence should contain a response or comment to an article previously published in *Pneumologia*, or address a topic of controversy. Research letters may present preliminary results of a study or short clinical case reports, unpublished before.

Letters to the editor should have a maximum of 500 words and no more than 5 references, one figure or table.

Letters to the editor should be submitted before 15th of the second month of the trimester in which one issue is published. Letters should be submitted by e-mail as attached documents, at pneumologia@pneumologia.eu, accompanied by the title, authors name, affiliation, funding, and, if applicable, the published article the letter refers to. It remains the choice of the editors to accept for publication a letter submitted to *Pneumologia*.

Pneumologia Editorial Group

We need Letters to the Editor

Dear Ms. Editor,

At the last respiratory meetings that I attended in Romania several colleagues mentioned the need for a separate heading in the journal *Pneumologia* that deals with public letters to Editor.

My impression is that the need for such a section is a valid one and comes from at least two reasons.

The first is the desire of colleagues, who have common clinical concerns, to discuss critically, in public, some results presented in the journal. It is possible that a clinical group from a certain hospital to have similar experiences, or perhaps different ones, but in similar conditions. Why it is so and not otherwise? What causes these differences? A decent public debate can be only beneficial for both the development of clinical practice and for the journal. This can lead to new hypotheses that deserve to be tested, and the journal may have more citations, more influence, and more high quality articles to publish.

A second reason is need to publish as letters perhaps smaller studies or clinical observations that otherwise

could not make it in the journal and could not be presented to the interested public. For example, I may have a clinical idea, but I only have results from a pilot study. These results could be first published as a Letter to the Editor. Such a research letter could establish priority and could open further collaborations around the respective idea.

At a time like today, when the tendency is towards full clinical and scientific dialogue and networking, via Twitter, Facebook and other social media that the journal has embraced, the absence of a "Letters to the Editor" section is a big minus.

I think this could be easily corrected, and I trust that it will be rectified as soon as possible. I hope very much that you will agree with me and you will publish my letter for open debate in *Pneumologia*.

Yours truly,

Tudor Toma, MD, PhD.

Consultant respiratory physician, University Hospital Lewisham & Greenwich, London, UK.
Journal director, *Pneumologia*

A letter to the editor: how to get it right

Letters to the editor are an important tool of communication with the journal's editorial staff, being a form of completing and debating the scientifically information of an article. The letter to the editors (LTE) gained amplitude with the development of journalism and became very popular in 19th century America. Pioneer of the journalism and literature genius of the Victorian era, Charles Dickens was among the first to write an LTE*¹.

The letters to the editors are usually based on commentaries or annotations to a previous printed article, completing the information in the original article. Many times, the author also replies with a LTE, controversial articles attracting numerous letters. An efficient online indexing, lists the original article along with the related letters. Some online publications allow the public to post commentaries directly to the original article.

The text has to be simple, not longer than the original article, with clear contribution to the general idea of the original article without repetitions from the original.

The information contained in the LTE must be backed-up with references and citations, and the author has to insert clear correspondence details.

After the submission of the LTE, the editorial staff will look into grammar and spelling, message, the focus on a clear purpose, the relevancy and accuracy of information. Opinions on biases, the sincerity, integrity and competence of the original authors, improper language or over-use of tables, figures and schemes, are discouraged. The letter authors' names and affiliations must be clearly stated and a list of any conflicts or competing interests must be pro-

vided, along with the declaration that the letter is original and not been submitted or published elsewhere.

Marry Anne Foote explains that a combative approach creates an arid, unproductive environment, encouraging the writing of the stylish, art-like aesthetically wrapped letters („*belle lettres***")².

Every LTE submitted is evaluated as any other article, having to comply with the length, text formatting and other journal-specific instructions³. If accepted, LTE will be form-processed and spell-proofed and its author will receive an acceptance letter from the editor with the final form⁽³⁾.

Even though not all the LTE are published, the guidelines from this article may help and encourage authors to submit more letters to the editors, consolidating an helpful journal's community.

In conclusion, be succinct and specific, provide information to support the work of the author not to critic, be courteous and objective not imperative and combative. Follow the journal's instructions for authors of LTE⁴.

Radu Crișan-Dabija, Traian Mihăescu
Iași

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3. Johnson, Claire and Green, Bart. How to write a letter to the editor: an author's guide. 5. s.l.: National University of Health Sciences, 2006, JOURNAL OF CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE, Vol. 4, pp. 144-147.
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* In 1839, participating to a public execution, Dickens writes a letter to the London's newspaper *The Times* condemning the behaviour of the crowd

** Belle lettres – fr. = beautiful letters

Visibility or tradition?

Pneumologia registered a significant revival in the past year. Switching entirely to English language enhanced the position of the journal in the competition with the other Romanian and international publications. Of course this is a step forward, but, nonetheless, I still ask myself, and also ask the editors, some questions ment to contribute to a better visibility of our journal.

Some of the pneumologists – different generation and different habits – complained, on the occasion of the scientific meetings we had around the country, that they don't understand English. What should we do about them? Will we have also some bilingual articles?

Related to journal's personality, I recently witnessed a discussion within the board of "Revue des Maladies Respiratoires", the journal of the Société de Pneumologie de Langue Française. They also raised the same problem, and found themselves in a deep dilemma: on one hand, to be visible in an English speaking medical world they need to translate the articles into English; on the other hand, the journal might lose it's personal touch and representa-

tion of the local Society.

No doubt, Romanian editorial field already contains several journals that switched 100% to publication in English. We ourselves already are present in PubMed and Elsevier databases, and we are unable to increase the circulation of Romanian works without articles in English. The question is still pending for the future, and I think we need more flexibility in this matter.

Regarding the quality of the articles, besides publication in English, there are two ways to increase the journal's indexation: to increase the quality threshold for foreign authors, making them pass through the same "purgatorium" as the Romanian authors, and, second, to increase the quality of articles published by Romanians. I think the recent workshops on how to write an article will be fruitful in this respect.

Best regards,

Prof. Florin Mihaltan

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