

## Editorial

### Pharmacoeconomics & Health Economics: Opening Access to Science and Practice

On behalf of the Editorial Board and the Editorial Office, I would like to welcome you to the launch of *The Open Pharmacoeconomics & Health Economics Journal* (TOPHARMEJ). This journal aims to provide the most complete and reliable source of information on current developments in the field of pharmacoeconomics and health economics.

The interest in pharmacoeconomics and health economics is ever-increasing around the world. This is witnessed by a flourishing industry of health economic consultancy agencies; the establishment of pharmaco-economic departments within pharmaceutical companies; the existence of several pharmacoeconomic and health economic professional societies; the creation of multiple journals; the issuance of guidelines on how to conduct economic evaluations by a rising number of countries; the consideration of health economic evidence as part of medicine reimbursement procedures; the availability of databases assessing the quality of published economic evaluations; and the growing interest of health care decision makers in this field. At more and more universities, pharmacoeconomics and health economics are being taught to economists, health care managers, physicians, pharmacists, nurses and other health professionals.

Why is there a need for a new journal in this field? While other journals tend to focus on specific areas, TOPHARMEJ wishes to provide a comprehensive guide to pharmacoeconomic and health economic research. Such information is required to promote the efficient use of scarce resources in the health care sector by informing decision making with respect to health technologies. This broad scope is reflected in the research areas, the health technologies, and the readership targeted by TOPHARMEJ.

TOPHARMEJ is a platform for applying economic principles to health, health care and health care systems. The journal covers a wide range of areas, including the assessment of health technologies by means of a cost analysis, economic evaluation and/or budget impact analysis; the economic analysis of health policy; the organization and financing of health care; the analysis of the market structure of specific health technologies, etc. Whereas health economics examines any health technology, pharmacoeconomics focuses specifically on medicines and related products.

Any health technology can be the subject of a health economic or pharmacoeconomic analysis and will be considered by TOPHARMEJ. A health technology refers to any measure for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of a disease: this includes vaccines, medicines, medical and surgical procedures, and medical devices. For instance, in contrast with medicines, less attention has been paid by health economists to the efficient use of resources relating to medical devices. This may be because medicines are a major source of health expenditure, whereas the medical device sector consists of a large number of niche sectors, with each sector covering few patients and incurring limited expenditure. Nevertheless, the range of medical devices is extensive, covering thousands of product types.

TOPHARMEJ targets a wide readership. It provides a forum for academic researchers to publish cutting-edge research and for decision makers to gain insight into research with a view to applying it to practice. Therefore, the journal wishes to build bridges between the various stakeholders interested in pharmacoeconomics and health economics. These stakeholders include not only health economists, consultants, and health care managers; but also health professionals, pharmaceutical and medical device companies, legislators, and patients.

As an Editor-in-Chief, I would like to invite you to submit your research to TOPHARMEJ. The Open Access format ensures that each peer-reviewed article that is published in TOPHARMEJ is universally and freely accessible *via* the Internet, offering a worldwide readership to authors at attractive fees. An online submission service facilitates a speedy and cost-effective submission of manuscripts and is available *via* Internet at [www.bentham-ftp.org/open/topharmej](http://www.bentham-ftp.org/open/topharmej). I sincerely hope that you will find TOPHARMEJ an invaluable resource in publishing your research and in keeping up-to-date with current developments in the field of pharmacoeconomics and health economics.

**Steven Simoens**

*(Editor-in-Chief)*

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