CJID&MM – Bold leadership in an emerging publishing model

Pulsus Group Inc will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2014. With a vision to publish, promote and disseminate the work of medical researchers in a manner that exemplifies the highest standards in research integrity, we have successfully established more than 10 Canadian journals. The first, *The Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, was sold to the Canadian Cardiovascular Society and is currently being published by a non-Canadian multinational. Today, we continue to publish six journals, all official publications of their respective Canadian medical societies. Each society receives a portion of revenues derived from the *Journal*. This includes the *Canadian Journal of Infectious Diseases & Medical Microbiology*, the official journal of the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada, which is in its 24th year of publication.

Over these 24 years, we have published hundreds of studies serving the Canadian and international research communities, and the Canadian physicians who receive the *Journal* free of charge. It has also served advertisers well by providing access to specialists and general practitioners with an interest in this therapeutic area. However, our business model – publication of research supported primarily by pharmaceutical advertising – is unravelling...

First, advertising support from pharmaceutical companies has decreased significantly over the past several years. This downward trend continued this year, when total advertising in Canadian medical journals decreased by 19.7% in the first six months of 2013. This *Journal* suffered a drastic 43.4% decrease. And now, a second threat has appeared on the horizon. Currently, all advertisements aimed at Canadian physicians must be precleared by the Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board (PAAB) and carry its logo, a process financed almost entirely by Canada's research-based pharmaceutical companies (Rx&D). Recently, PAAB, on an initiative of Rx&D, voted to replace all prescribing information (PI) with a combination of 'fair balance' (on the face of an advertisement or in close proximity)

and a link to the online product monograph. This comes into effect for all new advertisements precleared as of July 2013; however, there will be a one-year transition period in which both old-format ads (PI) and new-format ads (link to product monograph) will run.

The loss of PI is projected to result in a 30% decrease in advertising revenues. This necessitates significant changes to the *Journal* business model. Changes may include increasing the cost of advertising, decreasing distribution of the print copy and the pay-to-publish model, whereby authors are charged to publish their work, allowing for immediate open access. Thankfully, CJID&MM, under the astute leadership of Dr John Conly, made the change to an open-access, pay-to-publish model last year. Without this bold step, CJID&MM would in all likelihood not have survived.

We admit to being perplexed with the lack of advertising support from industry, the elimination of PI (leaving readers without immediate access to this important information) and Health Canada's sanction of this new model, but thanks to the changes we made two years ago, we have been able to survive and, indeed, thrive. We have relaunched the *Journal* website (www.pulsus.com) with many new attributes including an 'In Press' section, which will include articles awaiting print or online publication, and can be accessed by Society members and subscribers.

We will move forward with our mission, but at the same time would urge pharmaceutical companies to continue in their critical role of advertising in peer-review journals to support the dissemination of medical research. After all, unpublished research serves no one...

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