

EDITORIAL: ACADEMIC JOURNAL PUBLISHING REFORM

The COVID-19 pandemic global crisis has hastened transformations in all spheres of our lives and activities. The digital transformations that were taking place at snails' pace suddenly gained pace at lightning speed due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic publishing, a subfield of publishing which distributes academic research and scholarly works, has equally experienced renewed focus on Academic journal publishing reform. Open publication models have proved invaluable in fast and wide distribution of academic research and scholarly works during the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions. Consequently, traditional journal space is quickly giving way to online journal space. Most academic journals are now published in electronic form only. Electronic publishing has many advantages, including easier access to academic works, faster publication, cheaper distribution, increased visibility and high probability of citation. It is now an accepted fact that making academic research and scholarly works more accessible contributes to better and more efficient knowledge generation, and to innovation in all economic sectors. The value of any academic publication is in the number of citations it achieves as this speaks volumes about the quality and value of the publication. The Journal of Natural and Applied Sciences (JONAS) Editorial and Advisory boards have resolved that starting with this Issue, all JONAS publications shall only be in electronic form and open access. The journal shall continue following its peer-review process for all submitted manuscripts to assure quality and value of contributions. JONAS uses double-blind reviews to promote objectivity and fairness in the process. The COVID-19 pandemic has of course necessitated some changes in Journal Reviewing as a result of lessons learned from the need for quick publication of contributions addressing COVID-19 themed topics, and making them open access and available to the public. On one hand this reinforced the movement toward open access, while on the other hand it revealed the shortcomings in quick publication as some of the papers have had to be retracted by journal editors and their publishers (see retractionwatch.com). It is apparent that journal-led peer review is not infallible, especially when rushed. As JONAS embarks on its journey of online publications, we expect to experience a surge in submissions. The JONAS editorial team shall endeavour to ensure that the journal processes move with time and are not caught up in a web of antiquated processes. This transformation shall be a success story only with the continued support of reviewers and authors. We strongly encourage feedback from our readership through "Letters to the Editor" as one of our quality assurance approach. Let us all contribute to making JONAS visible and a high impact scientific journal.

Prof Levy Siaminwe

Chief Editor