

Family Medicine in 2023 and Beyond

Sarina Schrager, MD, MS

AUTHOR AFFILIATION:

Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

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With this issue of *Family Medicine*, we launch a new, fully online version of the journal. Based on reader surveys conducted in 2019 and 2021 as well as environmental considerations, the STFM Board of Directors decided to cease printing of the journal at their December 2021 board meeting. The November–December 2022 issue of *Family Medicine* was the last printed issue of the journal. Many STFM members continue to enjoy the printed version of the journal but are open to reading online as well. When the Board weighed pros and cons of changing *Family Medicine* from a print and online publication model to a solely online model, the benefits and functionalities of having an exclusively online journal became clear. The editorial and publication teams are working together to use this transition to update author instructions, decrease the acceptance to publication times, and enhance the journal's website.

Traditionally, the process of submitting a paper to a scholarly journal is an arduous one. You submit the paper and wait several months for a response from the journal. You hope they ask you to revise and resubmit, which you do, and then wait (again) to hear back whether your revisions were accepted. Once accepted, you then wait again for several months until your paper is published. An online publication model will decrease the last part of this journey. Waiting for papers to be reviewed depends mostly on availability and promptness of our peer reviewers. During the last few years, most journals in the medical field have had difficulty finding enough people who are willing to volunteer their time to review papers due to competing clinical responsibilities. Having a large group of skilled and knowledgeable reviewers helps the journal publish high quality papers more quickly. To that end, we are actively recruiting new peer reviewers (sign up via the [Family Medicine Reviewers page](#)) and appreciate the generosity of our accomplished reviewers. So, reducing the time that a paper is under review is a work in progress, but we are committed to reducing the time from acceptance of a paper and publishing it online. Going forward, we aim to publish all papers online within 6 weeks of acceptance as a part of our new publication model.

The opportunity to use resources previously dedicated to printing journals on website enhancements is vast. We want the website to be easy to use and engaging. We have done extensive research looking at other journals and are identifying features that suit the needs of our audience. With our January launch, you will notice enhancements to our [Family Medicine website](#) including curated collections of papers previously published in *Family Medicine* on a variety of topics, redesigned, web-optimized article PDFs, and enhanced search functionalities. We will also offer features helpful to authors such as an updated, revised, and reformatted author instructions page, a journal metrics page that will show time from acceptance to publication, acceptance rate, impact factor, and more. The new website is a work in progress and we will continue to evaluate new features and highlight potential new enhancements during the coming months.

The impact of transitioning from printing hard copies of the journal to exclusively online publishing has a significant impact on the environment. In their excellent commentary, DeMasi et al¹ discuss the ways that climate change affects the delivery of health care and outline how family medicine educators can get involved and educated about this important issue. STFM has been producing more than 5,000 print journals each issue. That equates to more than 60,000 per year and more than 300,000 print journals in a 5-year period, representing literally tons of paper that will no longer be physically transported to mailboxes around the world. So, moving forward, online publishing will save a meaningful

quantity of natural resources while continuing to sustain the vibrant platform for scholarly communication that our journal has provided for more than 50 years.

We understand that some people will miss having printed copies of *Family Medicine*. Any change is hard and the editorial and publication teams understand that people read and engage differently online as compared to in print. We are working to make the website easy to navigate and hope that you will explore the new features. Let us know what you think by emailing fmjournal@stfm.org. Happy new year! We are excited for the future of *Family Medicine*.

REFERENCES

1. Demasi M, Chekuri B, Paladine HL, Kenyon T. Climate Change: A Crisis for Family Medicine Educators. *Fam Med*. 2022;54(9):683–687.