

# Looking back, leading forward: *BMJ Leader* 5 years on

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BMJ and the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management<sup>1</sup> launched *BMJ Leader* in March 2017 with the aim that the journal should become a premier source for evidence-based research and diverse perspectives on clinical leadership and management.<sup>2</sup> The journal's purpose is to improve the results and experience delivered by health and care systems for patients, families, populations and workforces. To deliver on this purpose, the journal's content can help build better

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leaders (and followers) and nurture a healthcare community by improving connectivity and encouraging debate.

What have we accomplished so far? *BMJ Leader* has steadily grown in submission numbers and published articles. In addition to research papers and systematic reviews, the journal has launched new article types—for example, Leadership in the Mirror, Translating Research and Evidence, and The Learning Zone.<sup>3-5</sup>

But we have also deliberately gone beyond the peer-reviewed published article. In 2020, the journal launched the *BMJ Leader* Blog as a new arena for engagement, reflection and debate. *BMJ Leader* Twitter chats have further strengthened the journal's visibility, connectivity and relevance for an increasing global audience. *BMJ Leader* has become an official journal of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators. In 2022, the total number of content page views was 203 633 (up from 136 338 in 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on health systems globally, just as it did on the editorial focus and operations of *BMJ Leader*. In April 2020, we decided that the journal would mediate comments, opinions and reflections from leaders engaged in the COVID-19 pandemic response across the globe.<sup>6</sup> Consequentially, the editorial team gave priority to sharing experiences of leaders rapidly and to fast-track review processes for submission directly related to COVID-19. Furthermore, due to BMJ Group-wide policies, we were able to make articles related to COVID-19 freely available to all. During the pandemic, *BMJ Leader* has played an important role in sharing insights, knowledge, models and approaches that has been a resource for leaders in healthcare globally.

In 2022, the National Library of Medicine decided to index *BMJ Leader* in PubMed/MEDLINE. We took the decision

to index *BMJ Leader* in MEDLINE as a token of the journal's coverage, scientific rigour and impact. We are growing up as a journal. Indexation in these databases will make it easier for the general reader, learners, clinicians, educators, researchers and administrators to search for and find articles published in the journal, and it gives greater reason for authors to publish with us. According to Scopus, *BMJ Leader* has a CiteScore of 1.8 in 2021, up from 1.0 in 2020.<sup>7</sup>

Being an international, multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal, our mandate is to publish original research and systematic reviews that can advance our knowledge and understanding of leadership within healthcare. Alongside this mandate, in service of our mission for impact, *BMJ Leader* will continue to be an arena for sharing experiences and reflections on leadership challenges and lessons learnt. We are evolving from a journal focused on the peer-reviewed, written texts to a journal that also includes audio/video submissions, and blogs as well as social-media presence.<sup>8</sup> Some may perceive a tension between more accessible material in blogs and podcasts and the rigorous format that confers traditional legitimacy on an academic journal, but we believe the expansion of the journal's bandwidth is important to reach out to a wider audience and to reflect the breadth of our readership.

*BMJ Leader* has a rapidly expanding profile internationally, and we are increasingly the place that people turn for evidence and debate that matters in the most important areas. We aim to be at the cutting-edge on equity, diversity and inclusion, on kindness and on staff welfare and support.<sup>9</sup> We encourage submissions from authors with diverse perspectives and experiences. To support an inclusive approach, we have editors and associate editors from across the globe who themselves represent diverse backgrounds. This progress means more diverse reviewers with the necessary expertise to meaningfully review journal submissions. *BMJ Leader* is also developing a fellowship programme to mentor and develop a new generation of editors. There will also be calls for special issues that will focus on topical themes such as leadership and social justice, planetary health and global health.

Editing, reviewing and contributing to a journal can seem a long way away from what actually happens to patients, families, populations, learners, faculty and staff. When we publish on topics like

leadership in healthcare, moral injury, pandemic recovery, bias plus injustice,<sup>10–15</sup> and we witness how content is widely shared<sup>14</sup> including how practitioners have used material we have published, it is clear that *BMJ Leader* has impact in ways that matter.

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