



Fahad Aziz, MD, FASN

## Wisconsin Medical Journal: Building on a Year of Excellence

Fahad Aziz, MD, FASN, *WMJ* Editor-in-Chief

Since its inception in 1903, the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* (*WMJ*) has played a pivotal role in serving the Midwest's medical community. As a peer-reviewed, indexed journal, *WMJ* has consistently published impactful scientific work, with a strong focus on educating health care professionals and promoting research. Originally published by the Wisconsin Medical Society (Society), *WMJ*'s ownership transitioned in 2019 to the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH). Today, a dedicated Publishing Board, comprising members from both institutions and a Society representative, guides *WMJ*'s mission and direction.

Nearly three years ago, I began my journey as editor-in-chief, supported by the invaluable guidance of esteemed board members — Robyn Perrin, PhD, ELS, Elizabeth Petty, MD, Jonathan Temte, MD, PhD, MS, from SMPH, and Asriani M. Chiu, MD, Amalia Lyons, MD, FACP, and Sara L. Wilkins, MA, MPA, from MCW. Their collec-

tive wisdom ensured a smooth and successful transition into my role. I am also deeply grateful for the unwavering support of the Deans from both Institutions: Joseph Kerschner, MD, now dean emeritus of the School of Medicine at MCW, and Robert Golden, MD, SMPH dean

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and vice chancellor for medical affairs at UW–Madison. Their encouragement and leadership have been instrumental in sustaining *WMJ*'s excellence. Additionally, working closely with Kendi Neff-Parvin, our outstanding managing editor, and Robert Treat, PhD, our insightful deputy editor, has been both a privilege and a profound learning experience.

We remain dedicated to advancing *WMJ*'s legacy of scientific excellence while continuing to support the medical community across Wisconsin and beyond. This editorial highlights the journal's achievements in 2024 and outlines our ambitious goals for 2025. Our mission is to inspire progress in the medical field by fostering a collaborative community that values knowledge-sharing and promotes professional growth.

### Reflecting on 2024: Achievements and Milestones Publications

The year 2024 marked a period of remarkable growth for the journal, with an unprecedented rise in manuscript submissions. We received a

record-breaking 178 submissions, an increase of approximately 11% compared to the previous year. These submissions covered diverse categories, including original research, comprehensive reviews, detailed case reports, and insightful commentaries.

Our publication efforts kept pace with this momentum, resulting in 137 published manuscripts, a 37% increase from the previous year. To accommodate this surge in high-quality work, we expanded our publication schedule to six issues per year. This has proven highly effective in ensuring we provide ample space for valuable contributions from the medical community.

### Publication of Special Issue

In the final month of 2024, *WMJ* made a sig-

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nificant contribution to the understanding of maternal and child health by publishing a special double issue. This landmark edition featured 43 manuscripts as well as original artwork, showcasing the expertise and experiences of over 175 health professionals, researchers, students, and artists.

This issue aimed to illuminate the complexities surrounding maternal and child health through comprehensive studies, expert insights, and impactful case reports designed to improve care. Key themes explored include social determinants of health, obstetric health care delivery, health behaviors and practices, and pediatric health. By focusing on these critical areas, this issue underscores *WMJ*'s commitment to advancing knowledge and improving health care outcomes for mothers and children.

### Editorial Fellowships

In 2023, the *WMJ* took a significant step forward with the launch of its Editorial Fellowship Program — a visionary initiative designed to prepare the next generation of medical professionals to advance medical knowledge and uphold the journal's esteemed legacy. This program focuses on developing skills essential for managing and disseminating medical literature, cultivating future leaders aligned with *WMJ*'s mission.

We proudly celebrate the completion of the fellowship by our inaugural cohort of editorial fellows, which included Corlin Jewell, MD, David Mallinson, PhD, and Eduard Matkovic, MD. Building on their success, we welcomed our second cohort: Raul Rodriguez, MD, an assistant professor of infectious diseases, and Victoria Ronan, MD, an assistant professor of pediatrics and critical care, both from the Medical College of Wisconsin. The contributions of these fellows have already made a meaningful impact on advancing *WMJ*'s goals.

Looking ahead, we are excited to recruit a third cohort of editorial fellows in the fall of 2025. This ongoing cycle of mentorship and leadership development is vital to our commitment to editorial excellence, ensuring *WMJ* continues to be a valuable resource in medical scholarship and communication.

### Limited Series

In 2024, the Publishing Board and editorial leadership introduced a new journal feature—the limited series. This series of columns is meant to provide in-depth information on topics deemed relevant to the practice of medicine. The first series, authored by Robert Calder, MD, MS, and Jayshil Patel, MD, aims to equip medical students and practicing clinicians with essential biostatistics knowledge — a crucial skill set for interpreting medical literature and improving clinical decision-making. Both experts bring valuable insights to this initiative, aiming to strengthen biostatistical understanding among health care professionals. Through this initiative, *WMJ* aims to foster lifelong learning and empower medical professionals.

### 2025 Outlook

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to maintaining our publication schedule of six issues annually and plan to end the year with a special issue dedicated to the theme of Medical Education. We anticipate this issue will showcase groundbreaking insights in medical education and inspire continued dialogue within the medical community.

This issue will feature topics that address crucial aspects of medical education and training. Potential areas of focus include the impact of health policy on education; the application of research methodologies in curriculum analysis; and the integration of technology such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, simulation, telemedicine, and e-learning in education. In addition, we hope to explore themes such as community engagement to advance health equity, innovations promoting culturally responsive care, and quality improvement initiatives. It will also highlight topics like educational psychology, systems-based approaches, and the role of mentorship, advising, and coaching in medical education.

The deadline for submissions is July 15, 2025. Visit our website ([www.wmjonline.org](http://www.wmjonline.org)) to learn more.

### Seeking Editorial Talent

To manage the growing volume of submissions and enhance our publication process, *WMJ* is

looking to expand its editorial team. We are actively seeking two to three deputy editors to improve operational efficiency and expedite manuscript processing. This expansion also provides new professionals with valuable editorial experience, fostering the next generation of medical editors.

In addition, we are looking to broaden our editorial board, which currently includes a diverse group of physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, and pharmacists. As some board members complete their tenure, we aim to recruit new members from various medical specialties to support *WMJ*'s mission and vision.

Recognizing the essential role of peer reviewers, we are also seeking to expand our reviewer pool. Increasing reviewer engagement will improve manuscript turnaround times and ensure our commitment to publishing high-quality medical research.

We invite dedicated professionals eager to contribute to their expertise to join us in these roles. Please contact us at [wmj@med.wisc.edu](mailto:wmj@med.wisc.edu) for more information.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to all those who contribute to the journal's success—those mentioned above, as well as our colleagues at Ebling Library, whose expertise and assistance is invaluable; the authors; and, of course, our valued readers. The collective efforts of this committed community have shaped the journal's impact, producing publications that are both informative and influential. Through shared knowledge and rigorous peer review, together, we have created a platform that continues to make a meaningful difference in the medical community.

advancing the art & science of medicine in the midwest

**WMJ**

*WMJ* (ISSN 2379-3961) is published through a collaboration between The Medical College of Wisconsin and The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The mission of *WMJ* is to provide an opportunity to publish original research, case reports, review articles, and essays about current medical and public health issues.

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