



## ***AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH* EDITORIAL BOARD**

### **REPORT TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL •**

**OCTOBER 2023**

This Report provides a summary of the activities and accomplishments of the *American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)* for the past year. The *AJPH* is a premier public health outlet for the United States and the world. It is well-known for its high reputation and standards.

In accomplishing its goals the *AJPH* continues to support the vision and mission that were created to guide our principles. These principles provide direction, action and evaluation.

#### **OUR VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS ARE OUR ROAD MAP**

The Mission of the *American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)* is to advance public health research, policy, practice, and education. The *AJPH* will be recognized nationally and internationally as the premier public health journal, being the most utilized source of public health knowledge, practice, policy, and education, resulting in the improved health of individuals and communities

The editorial values of the *AJPH* are editorial independence, the state of the science, diverse, innovative, and provocative viewpoints, social justice, and, quality, timely, accessible, and useful public health information, knowledge and wisdom. Furthermore, the *AJPH* endorses the values of the American Public Health Association (APHA), which include health, equity, diversity, empowerment, integrity, dignity, and knowledge for individuals and communities to forge the future of public health nationally and globally.



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## THE STRATEGIC PLAN DEFINES OUR PRINCIPLES OF DIRECTION, ACTION AND EVALUATION

The purpose of the strategic plan is to guide the work of the *AJPH* Team (i.e., Editorial Team, Editorial Board, Journal Staff) in achieving the journal’s mission and vision. Specifically, the strategic plan will serve to:

- Guide the *AJPH* Team in the execution of journal activities.
- Guide the assessment of the progress of the *AJPH* Team in meeting goals and objectives driven by the mission and vision.
- Assist authors, readers, and other stakeholders of the *AJPH* in understanding the role of the *AJPH* Team in achieving the mission and vision of the journal.

Five imperatives are reflected in the current strategic plan and include:

**Strategic Imperative I:** Publish the highest quality public health research and advancements in practice to strengthen public health science, policy and practice

**Strategic Imperative II:** Disseminate journal content to the broadest audience

**Strategic Imperative III:** Maximize utilization of journal content by public health researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and educators

**Strategic Imperative IV:** Advise on journal business practices to ensure sustainability of the journal

**Strategic Imperative V:** The Editorial Board is fully engaged to support the journal

This report is organized by imperative to show progress in each of the 5 areas.

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## Strategic Imperative I:

**Publish the highest quality public health research and advancement in practice to strengthen public health science, policy and practice**

### RANKING OF THE JOURNAL IN CLARIVATE STATISTICS

Our Impact Factor has increased to 12.700 from 11.561 (Table 1). We are currently ranked 10 of 207 journals in the Public, Environmental and Occupational Health category of the Science Index, and 6 of 181 journals in the same category for the Social Sciences Index of the Clarivate<sup>1</sup> Journal Citation Report. We will continue to strive to increase our impact factor. *Note.* IFs are slow to reflect changes in the citations the journal gets. For example, the IF for 2022 is the ratio of the “citations in 2021 for publications in 2020 and 2019” over the total number of citable items in 2019 and 2020. Any changes that occurred in the journal in 2019 and 2020 are reflected in this year’s Impact Factor.

**Table 1—Journal Impact Factor and Ranking, by Year and Index**

YEAR	IMPACT FACTOR	SCIENCE INDEX RANKING	SOCIAL SCIENCES INDEX RANKING
2022	12.700	10/207	6/181
2021	11.561	13/210	7/183
2020	9.308	9/203	6/176
2019	6.464	13/193	7/169
2018	5.381	12/185	6/162
2017	4.380	16/180	4/157
2016	3.858	24/176	8/157
2015	4.138	16/172	5/153
2014	4.552	13/162	5/145
2013	4.229	14/160	4/136
2012	3.930	16/158	4/136
2011	3.926	13/157	3/131
2010	3.850	13/140	3/114
2009	4.371	9/122	2/95



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2008	4.241	10/105	3/76
2007	3.612	10/100	2/77
2006	3.698	11/98	2/66
2005	3.566	11/99	2/63
2004	3.241	8/93	2/60
2003	3.363	6/89	2/56
2002	3.279	7/90	9/55
2001	3.034		
2000	3.269		
1999	3.015		

### **H-Index**

The H-Index is an author-level metric that attempts to measure both the productivity and citation impact of the publications of a scientist or scholar. The index is based on the set of the scientist's most cited papers and the number of citations that they have received in other publications. Our 2022 H-Index is 293, up from 278 in 2021, 264 in 2020 and 253 in 2019, which ranks us 3 out of 611 journals for the fifth year in a row. Our overall Scimago Journal Ranking Indicator is 2.645, which ranks us 11 of 611 journals and is a slight increase from 2021, when *AJPH* was 2.409 and ranked 13 of 585 journals. *AJPH* remains ranked within the first quartile (highest ranking) of all journals. Among all journals in this database, the journal ranks #181 of 27,955 journals overall (or the top 0.6%) for H-index and #786 of 27,955 journals overall (or the top 2.8%) for the Scimago Journal Ranking Indicator.

### **Eigenfactor Score**

The eigenfactor score is a metric that indicates the influence of a journal within the field and measures where content is being cited and how often. The greater the score the more influential the journal's content is considered to be. At its core, the score indicates that high impact journals are citing journal material in their articles. For 2022, the journal eigenfactor scores is 0.04677. This score indicates that journal content is being cited often by high-impact journals and therefore remains the top influential journal in the field. Normalized to a score of 1, our eigenfactor jumps to 10.18069, which indicates that studies published in *AJPH* are 10 times more influential than articles published in other journals.



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Historically, the journal has consistently ranked top four in eigenfactor score since 2014 in the Social Science Citation Index and Science Citation Index, respectively.

*AJPH* research published in the last 100 years was cited 49,951 times in 6,173 journals. Top citing journals include *PLOS One*, *Frontiers in Public Health*, *BMC Public Health*, *Jama Network Open*, and more.

## **Strategic Imperative II:**

### **Disseminate journal content to the broadest audience**

#### **RSS Alerts**

From July 2022 to June 2023, the journal emailed monthly issue alerts to 3.94 million individuals, or 328,401 people per month. Of the 3.94 million individuals receiving email alerts, 747,696 were members and 3,193,119 were non-members. Approximately 35% (1,387,916) of the emails were opened, and 2.3% of people who opened an email clicked on one of the embedded links. From July-November 2022, we emailed one notice per month; beginning in January 2023, we began emailing one notice per week.

#### **Website Statistics**

In FY2022, we had 8.56 million visitors, a 7% increase over last year, who read 2.32 million abstracts and 5.47 million articles (10% decrease). Mobile use of the website decreased by 20% to 577,497 mobile accesses during the fiscal year. We averaged 713,059 site visitors per month (7% increase).

Globally, the majority of users are from the United States, followed in order by the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, and Australia. After North America, most users are from Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America.

#### **Marketing Efforts**

*AJPH* is typically promoted at conferences for the North American Serials Group, Special Libraries Association, Pacific Northwest Medical Library Association, South Central Chapter Medical Library Association, North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries Association, Charleston Conference on Collection Development, Michigan Health Science Library Association, North Atlantic Health Science Libraries, The Mid-Atlantic Medical Library Association Conference, American Library Association-midwinter and annual meetings, Special Libraries Association and Health Tech, Massachusetts Health Sciences Library Network, Medical Library Association, and the PubMart booth at the APHA annual meeting. *AJPH* is considered an Essential Core Journal for Public Health by the Medical Library Association section on Public Health and Health Administration.



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Marketing efforts this year were heavily focused on customer retention, especially as libraries continue to struggle with smaller budgets in comparison with previous years. In addition, we targeted small health institutes and community health clinics, public health organizations and state departments, and hospitals. Globally, we targeted health agencies and hospitals, with special efforts to retain customers in Japan and Asia. Finally, we focused on sales retention through smaller subscription agents such as WTCox and Prenax with good success.

Each month we email an electronic table of contents (eToc) all AJPH customers to promote the usage of journal content and to further establish AJPH as their source of information. Domestic subscribers open at a rate of 10.78% each month and click on embedded links approximately 6.91% of the time. Foreign subscribers open at a rate of 11.31% but only clicked on a link 5.1% of the time. These are in line with industry norms.

For FY2024 we will continue to focus on retention by showcasing our improved fulfillment process to the subscription agencies and consortia, both domestic and foreign. By having the materials in their hands well in advance, we expect them to be able to quickly address price requests and close subscription renewals with their customers.

Finally, we will be conducting planned promotion efforts aimed at further expanding AJPH reach within federal and state governmental entities. This will be done both with direct promotion and through relationships with agencies that have strong sales reputations within the various departments.

### **Subscriptions Performance**

As of year-end CY2022, AJPH had 432 subscribers vs 520 in CY2021, a loss of 88 subscriptions. This loss is a continuation of issues pertaining to the abrupt closure in early October 2022 of APHA's subscription fulfillment provider. This action prevented the normal course of renewal as the subscriber status information provided was limited and unreliable, which impacted the ability to renew customers for the 2023 calendar year. However, it should be noted, the fulfillment process was stabilized in late CY2022 and service to the subscribers in 2023 improved. This has resulted in much improved customer satisfaction. We also raised rates by 3% over the previous year, when subscription rates had been held flat, and librarians may have decided not to renew directly with AJPH because of budget constraints.

By June 2023, the journal had 423 institutional subscribers, which is 8 less than our final total in CY2022. Geographically, 59% of our subscribers are domestic and 41% are foreign, with the largest five (5) subscriber concentrations in India, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada and China in that order. However, it is important to note there are thirty-three (33) countries represented among our subscribers. Most have online subscriptions or print + online subscriptions vs print-only subscriptions. The print subscription



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business continues to decline year over year as customers migrate to a digital-only subscription. However, it should be noted there is still reasonable demand for print in many of the foreign markets.

### **Strategic Imperative III:**

#### **Maximize utilization of journal content by public health researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and educators**

The *Journal* continues to promote articles through various social media channels, which includes the blogs--*AJPH* Talks and Public Health Newswire--Facebook page, YouTube channel, and Twitter feed. These outlets are used to promote individual issues and articles within the *Journal*, highlight articles being covered by other news outlets, relate content in the *Journal* to current affairs and APHA efforts, and announce new policies, products, and *Journal* features.

The most read articles this past year were:

- “SARS-CoV-2 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death in Vaccinated and Infected Individuals by Age Groups in Indiana, 2021–2022”: Read **75,697** times, published in the January 2023 issue.
- “Trend in Loaded Handgun Carrying Among Adult Handgun Owners in the United States, 2015–2019”: Read **8,994** times, published in the December 2022 issue.
- “Over the Precipice Into a Post-Roe World: A Look at Abortion Rights and Access in the United States”: Read **7,027** times, published in the September 2022 issue.

The most shared articles this past year were:

- “SARS-CoV-2 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death in Vaccinated and Infected Individuals by Age Groups in Indiana, 2021–2022” published in the January 2023 issue; Altmetric Score: **1376** (ranks 261 of 462,054 articles published around this time).



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- “Trend in Loaded Handgun Carrying Among Adult Handgun Owners in the United States, 2015–2019” published in the December 2022 issue; Altmetric Score: **778** (ranks 677 of 470,645 articles published around this time).
- “Dollar Stores and Food Access for Rural Households in the United States, 2008–2020,” published in the March 2023 issue; Altmetric Score **612** (ranks 926 of 407,272 articles published around this time).

The most cited articles this past year were:

- “Xylazine and Overdoses: Trends, Concerns, and Recommendations,” published in the August 2022 issue; **24 citations across 7 disciplines.**
- “E-Cigarette Flavors, Devices, and Brands Used by Youths Before and After Partial Flavor Restrictions in the United States: Canada, England, and the United States, 2017–2020,” published in the July 2022 issue; **17 citations across 4 disciplines.**
- “Contact Tracing: Barriers and Facilitators,” published in the July 2022 issue; **13 citations across 5 disciplines.**
- “Antiracism and Community-Based Participatory Research: Synergies, Challenges, and Opportunities,” published in the January 2023 issue; **13 citations across 4 disciplines.**

The most read issues this past year were:

- “A Digital Journal for a Greener Earth”: Accessed **93,551** times (January 2023)
- “Over the Precipice to a Post-Roe World”: Accessed **61,820** times (September 2022)
- “COVID-19 & The Health Equity Data Gaps”: Accessed **59,138** times (October 2022)

### Twitter

We currently have 13,625 (5% increase from 2022) followers on Twitter. Our 240 tweets (8.6% increase) this past year were viewed 333,359 times (32% decrease), and 9,635 people (5.4% decrease) have engaged with posted content.

### Facebook

On Facebook, we have 17,439 followers (0.3% decrease from 2022). We posted 177 times (7.3% decrease) on Facebook, and those posts were viewed 9,670 times (92.2% decrease) and engaged by 1,415 people (no change from last year).





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### **Podcasts**

Dr. Morabia continues to produce the *AJPH* Podcast in both English and Chinese. Since 2015 the *AJPH* podcast has been listened to 157,000 times. Over the last 12 months, it had 22,700 listeners. The podcast continues to be ranked 3 out of 30 for the best public health podcasts (<https://www.mphonline.org/best-public-health-podcasts>).

The most listened English tracks were:

- *AJPH* 7/2022: "Monkeypox Pandemic," 1,898 accesses
- *AJPH* 8/2022: "Harassment of Public Health Officials" 1,757 accesses
- *AJPH* 9/2022: "Reproductive Rights After the Supreme Court Decision on *Dobbs v Jackson* " 1,577 accesses

The most listened Chinese track was:

- *AJPH* Chinese Podcast, "Podcast #4 of 2022," 1,211 accesses

### **Media Coverage**

The *American Journal of Public Health* continues to be featured, cited or referenced in local and national news coverage from online, print, radio and television media outlets. The media has covered *AJPH* studies with each monthly release of new research and special supplements.

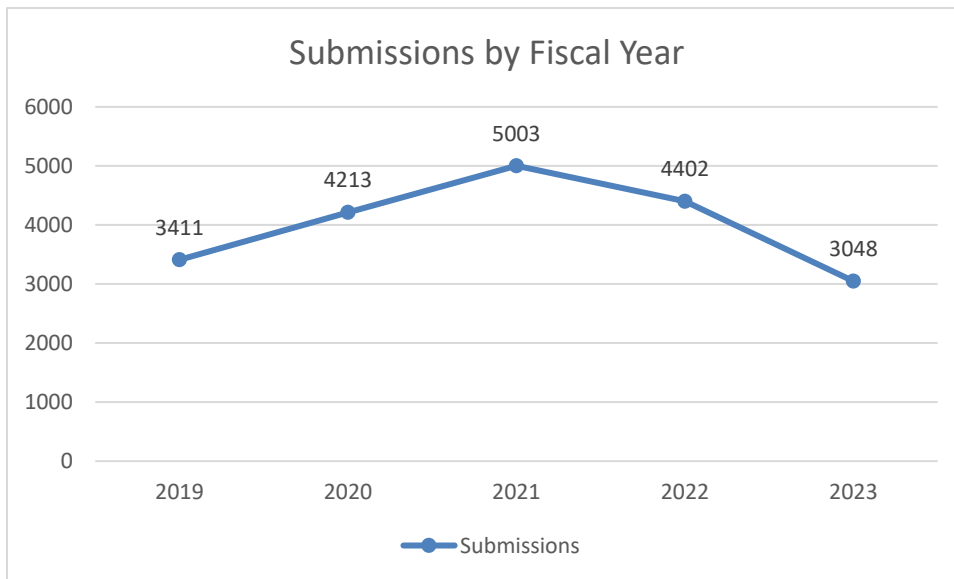
**Strategic Imperative IV:**

**Advise on journal business practices to ensure sustainability of the journal**

In FY2022, we published 18 issues (12 regular issues plus 6 Supplement issues), or 423 articles, 275 of which were published as open access pieces. We produced a total of 2,129 pages (1,568 print pages plus an additional 561 online-only pages).

**Times from Submission and Acceptance to Publication**

Submissions decreased by 30% compared to 2022 numbers. Submissions were 3,048 in FY2023 vs 4,402 in FY2022. Figure 1 presents data from the last 5 years. The pandemic artificially inflated the number of incoming submissions, and as people return to normal work, those numbers continue to decline.



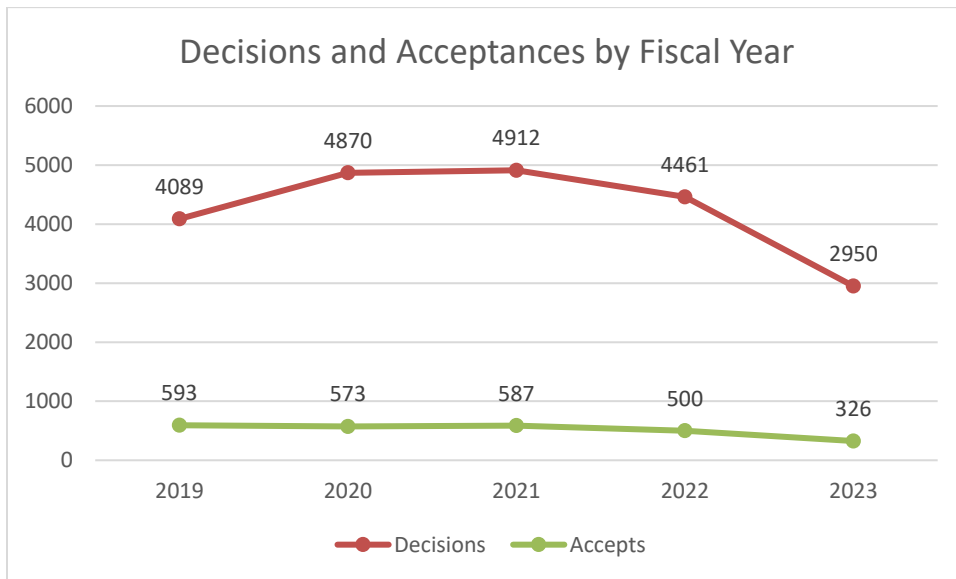
**Figure 1—Submissions to the journal, by fiscal year: 2019–2023.**



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In FY2023 “Accept” decisions numbered 326 of 2,950 decisions vs 500 of 4,461 in 2022. The number of decisions is starting to come down overall, which reflects the decrease in overall number of submissions. The number of accepted papers also declined compared to previous years. Figure 2 provides data from the last 5 years.

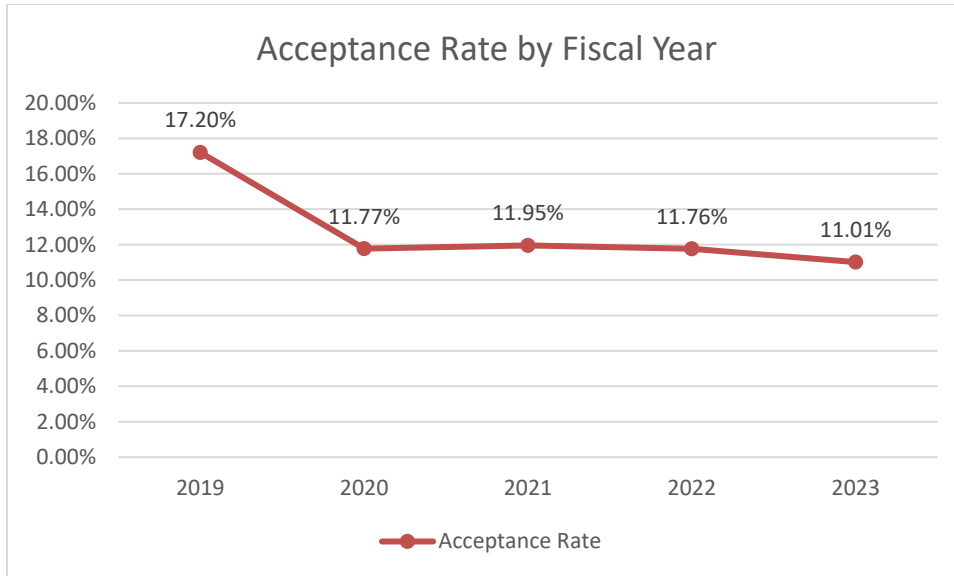
The overall acceptance rate decreased slightly to 11.01% from 11.74% the previous year. For research-oriented papers, the acceptance rate remains very low at 4.2%. The journal Editors continue to be selective about the papers that make it into peer review, and this has kept the acceptance rate stable while keeping other rankings high. Generally, a lower acceptance rate indicates greater selectivity in which papers are published. Figure 3 shows change in acceptance rate over 5 years.



**Figure 2—Journal Acceptances and Decisions, by fiscal year: 2019–2023.**



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**Figure 3—Acceptance rate, by fiscal year: 2019–2023.**

The time it takes a paper to move from submission to review increased to 24.0 days in FY2023, closer to previous years, as compared to 16.1 days in FY2022. Figure 4 shows our 5-year performance.



**Figure 4—Number of days from submission to assignment for peer review, by fiscal year: 2019–2023.**



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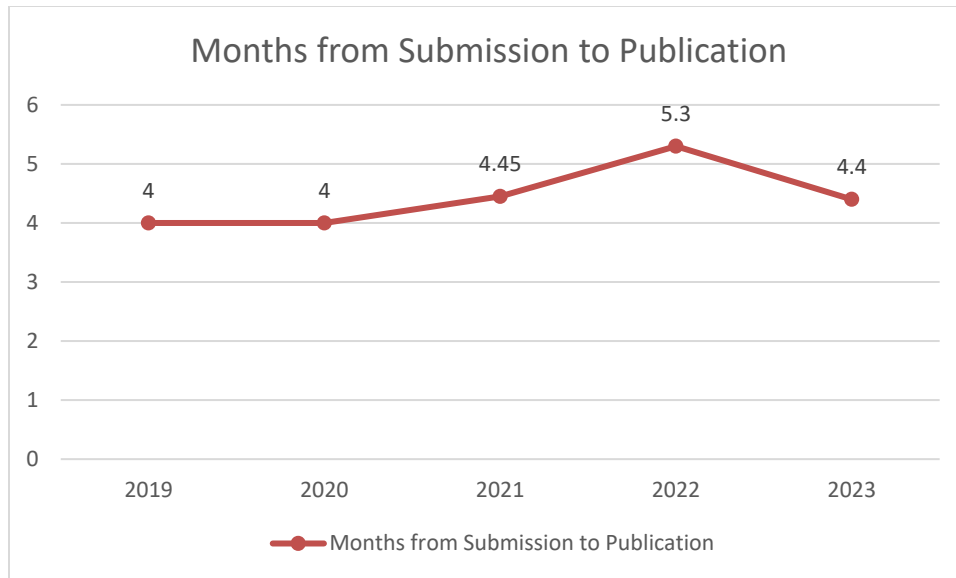
Peer reviewers have experienced an influx of peer review requests, which has reduced overall availability to conduct peer review. They are declining requests more often, and as a result, it is taking longer for papers to undergo peer review. Therefore, time to publication increased this year. Most papers were accepted within 1.53 months in FY2023 vs 2.27 months in FY2022, and research papers that undergo peer review took a median time of 4.2 months and 3 rounds of peer review before being accepted. Rejected papers were typically rejected within 6.5 days of submission. Our 5-year performance appears in Figure 5. Finally, time from submission to online publication decreased to 4.4 months in FY2023 as compared to 5.3 months in FY2022. Figure 6 shows our 5-year performance.



**Figure 5—Number of months from submission to acceptance, by fiscal year: 2019–2023.**



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**Figure 6—Number of months from submission to online publication, by fiscal year: 2019–2023.**

These rates reflect the continued commitment of the APHA staff and the *AJPH* editors and reviewers, who continually strive to position the *AJPH* as the premier public health journal in the world.

### Topics Secured For External Funding

*AJPH* continues its commitment to ensure that science and research are intertwined throughout the publication of state-of-the-art manuscripts.

Topics that have been secured through external funding and published in FY2023 include:

- Ubiquitous Lead (September 2022; \$95,000)
- First 1,000 Days (October 2022; \$75,000)
- RADx-UP and COVID-19 (November 2022; \$75,000)
- Structural Racism and Health (January 2023; \$75,000)
- HIV Equity (March 2022; \$70,000)

*Total revenue from these projects is \$390,000.*



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In FY2024 we plan to produce funded issues on:

- Leveraging the Power of Communities (December 2023; 85,000)
- Equitable Access to Family Nutrition Support (December 2023; \$80,000)
- Health Worker Mental Health (February 2024; \$75,000)
- Mental Health, Community Culture, and Public Health (March 2024; \$107,400)
- Protecting Vulnerable Populations from COVID-19 (April 2024; \$49,000)
- Primary Care Training and Enhancement (May 2024; \$131,000)
- Emerging Issues in Latino Health (June 2024; \$125,000)

*Total expected revenue from these projects is \$652,400.*

## **Strategic Imperative V:**

### **The Editorial Board is fully engaged to support the journal**

In the last year, the *AJPH* Editorial Board has explored ways to facilitate promotion of the journal and ensure member engagement. The Board has focused on four areas: (1) number of board members serving as peer reviewers, (2) monthly promotion of journal material via social media, (3) engagement with APHA sections and members, and (4) advisement on ethical issues (e.g., plagiarism, scientific misconduct). The number of editorial board members serving as peer reviewers continues to increase year over year, and we have provided the Editor team with a list of board members, expertise, and areas of interest. Furthermore, engagement with *AJPH* material via social media has increased. To engage APHA sections to a greater extent, an editorial board subcommittee has been formed to develop a series of webinars based upon section and member feedback. The first webinar was conducted in the Fall of 2020 and addressed the peer review process. The second webinar was conducted in the Fall of 2021 and focused on how authors could promote content through social media. The 2022 webinar focused on practice-based publishing and was well attended. The 2023 webinar series was put on hold, but planning activities are in place for 2024. The Editorial Board ideally will continue to provide webinars twice a year moving forward.



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Our focus this year has been on reviewing and updating policy for the journal program. We identified a glaring gap in the policy surrounding post-publication name changes, for example. The current policy prohibits name changes is restrictive and not in keeping with current standards on diversity and equity. We convened a subcommittee of members of the Editorial Board and LGBTQ Health Caucus to explore this issue and discussed needed changes. We determined that AJPH's policy should match publishing industry standards, specifically recommending the Sage guidelines, and have a mechanism to allow authors to update their names under defined circumstances and within a specified timeline. With the LGBTQ Health Caucus, we then drafted and sent a letter outlining the needed actions to AJPH's publisher. Our efforts have led to the implementation of an ORCID identification interface with both the AJPH submission and publication websites, a new policy on inclusiveness, and an Editorial regarding this initiative in a forthcoming issue of AJPH.

A major activity in the near future is the discussion around artificial intelligence and its place in research, publishing, and public health policy. Editorial Board members are participating on a subcommittee exploring this issue with members of the AJPH Editor team, external thought leaders, and PAHO.

Finally, the Editorial Board continues to provide advice on journal activities and business directions. We've participated in calls with members of the Supplement Issue program to provide potential themes and topics of issues and connect developed themes with potential external funders.

The Editorial Board, through its standing subcommittee on strategic planning, continually monitors the progress on the strategic plan and modifying it appropriately to meet the mission and vision of the journal in light of the ever-changing external environment.





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## From Alfredo Morabia:

From January 1, 2023, through October 3, 2023, we made final decisions on: **2,420** papers; extrapolated to 12 months, this would be approximately **3,223** expected final decisions in 2023, vs 3,239 in 2022; 5.4% of submitted research papers were accepted during this period in 2023.

From January 2023–September 2023, time to peer review invitation took 24.9 days vs 16.2 days for the same period in 2022. We continue to process manuscripts at a fast rate. Overall, time from submission to acceptance increased slightly but remains low at 2.56 months vs 1.43 months in 2022, and submission to publication is taking 5.2 months vs 3.6 months in 2022.

We have published 6 supplements in 2023:

Supplement 6 2022 – COVID-19: Health Emergency Preparedness in Latin America and the Caribbean

Supplement 7 2022 – Ubiquitous Lead: Risks, Prevention-Mitigation Programs, and Emerging Sources of Exposure

Supplement 8 2022 – Nutrition in the First 1,000 Days

Supplement 9 2022 – RADx-UP: Community-Based COVID-19 Testing and Research in Underserved Populations

Supplement 1 2023 – Structural Racism and Public Health

Supplement 2 2023 – HIV, Substance Use, and Trauma: Mentoring to Dismantle Structural Racism

We have signed contracts for 7 upcoming supplements on “Leveraging the Power of Communities,” “Equitable Access to Family Nutrition Support,” “Health Worker Mental Health,” “Mental Health, Community Culture, and Public Health,” “Protecting Vulnerable Populations from COVID-19,” “Primary Care Training and Enhancement,” and “Emerging Issues in Latino Health”

Overall, feedback indicates that the journal has become more attractive for a large readership of practitioners, academics, and policymakers.



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## **SUMMARY**

The Journal continues to increase its reach and impact toward advancing public health while reaffirming our commitment to editorial independence, and other core policies and ethical principles that are part of our core values and ways of moving forward to create a more just society and humanity.

The *AJPH* Editorial Board, the Editors and the Publisher are delighted to be part of the accomplishments of the Journal. We are a collaborative team that continues to advance the *AJPH*'s vision and mission using values of excellence in leadership, science and translation, policy and publication.