

EMAIL SENT TO IJPH / PHR AUTHORS AND REVIEWES OF PAST YEARS WITH FINNISH AFFILIATION – SENT ON 14.1.2025 (BCC)

From: Nino Künzli/TPH
To: "Nino Künzli" <nkuenzli@ssphplus.ch>
Date: 14.01.2025 15:11
Subject: Info to Finnish authors of our SSPH+ journals, now under defaming attack by JUFO (Julkaisufoorumi)

Dear colleagues

In the past three years, you have either volunteered as reviewer for or published in [IJPH](#) or [PHR](#) - the journals of the Swiss School of Public Health ([SSPH+](#)) - with a Finnish affiliation. This is why I am reaching out to you today.

I am the [SSPH+](#) Directorate representative of the journals. SSPH+ - owner of the journals - is a not-for-profit foundation of fourteen Swiss universities, which together form a virtual multidisciplinary faculty of public health sciences across Switzerland.

Embarrassing news reached us via social media shortly before Christmas: the Finnish [Publication Forum](#), namely its [JUFO steering group](#), is spreading defamations against the two SSPH+ journals. This began in fall 2024 with the announcement that JUFO would downgrade the SSPH+ journals to “grey area Level 0” in 2025, thus, raising (undefined) suspicions against IJPH and PHR.

It is particularly disappointing that JUFO:

- Never reached out to SSPH+ to discuss their concerns, as is common practice among scientists
- Did not respond (as of 14.1.25) to our request not to adopt this downgrading, sent on 30.12.2024 (see [Letter](#))
- Downgraded the SSPH+ journals from level 1 to 0 sometimes between January 6th and January 11th, 2025 in the online tool ([accessed](#) last time), despite the evidence presented in our letter

As argued in the letter, JUFO’s attack discredits our dedicated scientists engaging as unbiased editors to guarantee the high quality of the independent SSPH+ journals. The journals have operated in line with all ethical standards of scientific publishing for decades, including [COPE](#). JUFO also defames all scientists who submit manuscripts to the SSPH+ journals or who volunteer as reviewers.

Worse of all, JUFO violates and ignores its own [classification](#) scheme. JUFO publishes a list with seven basic criteria that must be fulfilled by journals at “Level 1” or above. Despite being downgraded to “Level 0”, the SSPH+ journals fulfill all of these criteria, and have done so for many decades. Conversely, among the “Level 3” journals of health sections (Nr 11 and Nr. 14, last accessed 13.1.25), several journals are listed that do not even comply with the Level 1 criteria. In sum, JUFO’s classification lacks evidence and transparency, while making downgrading decisions that are entirely unfounded.

Here some ideas about what you could do to help:

- a) Sign the [Open Letter](#) initiated by Finish leaders against the unfounded downgrading
- b) Reach out to any [JUFO Steering Group](#) members that you may know to stand up against these defamations
- c) Share all of this with your colleagues, at home and abroad, to empower the community against defamations spread about Open Access (OA) journals. OA threatens the interests and profits of subscription and hybrid publishers, and still has major powerful enemies. JUFO is neither the first nor last academic commission to defame OA journals. It is time to stand up.
- d) Tell us if you hear about similar attacks from other committees.

Let me end with more positive words. I am happy to confirm that SSPH+ remains proud to run two fully independent “society journals”. The editors and the independent SSPH+ Editorial Management Office, hosted at Swiss TPH and lead by Dr. Christopher Woodrow, will remain the anchor of the SSPH+ journals. IJPH and PHR continue to stick to a rigorous and transparent peer review with all “accept decisions” taken jointly by at least two experienced and respected editors of [IJPH](#) and [PHR](#). Since 2021 the journals fully comply with the Open Access (OA) model, as promoted by the E.U. and many leading authorities all through the global scientific community. We are proud that we could give up the unethical hybrid publishing model. SSPH+ will defend OA and make all efforts to become “Diamond OA” i.e. free for both authors and readers to access. Until this is achieved, we will stick to the current modest APC OA fees that are used to cover all costs of the journals, including the external publisher services, now provided by Frontiers (Lausanne, Switzerland). We will also continue our strategies to raise funds in support of our [Globequity](#) fee waiver program to support authors from low and middle income countries.

Thank you very much for your continued trust in the SSPH+ journals. You are welcome as authors and reviewers.

With best regards
Nino Künzli, MD PhD

PS: sorry in case you get more than one related email. We may reach out to all authors and reviewers later in January. This will include you.

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