

## Correspondence

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and publishers cannot agree on a *universal manuscript* with one common login, one reference style, submitted as a single file upload, with zero signatures or forms at the time of initial submission.

Once a manuscript is deemed worthy of revision or acceptance, publishers could demand their own unique house style for the formatting and production and could ask the authors to upload forms, etc. While organizations such as the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) could take the lead and create a *universal manuscript* template for all medical journals, we would like to see a journal like the *National Medical Journal of India* advocate this idea, whose time has come.

The medical publishing industry is having a challenging time,<sup>2,3</sup> and it is important for medical editors and publishers to tune into the needs of the research community. Otherwise, they run the risk of alienating their most critical stakeholders.

*Conflicts of interest.* None declared

### REFERENCES

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### A *universal manuscript* for all medical journals

It is a source of much frustration to authors that medical journals have vastly different submission requirements.<sup>1</sup> These differences span the whole spectrum: from the need for each journal to have a unique login/password to differing word-counts for the abstract to a mind-numbing array of referencing styles. To make matters worse, each journal has its own set of author forms and signatures. In 2019, it is incredible that some journals still insist on wet signatures!

None of these issues have any bearing on the quality of the research work, and addressing these for each submission is a tremendous drain on researchers' time and energies. It is hard to understand why editors

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