

The quest for quality

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Quality. Quality in medical care. Quality in clinical and basic research. Quality in health care organisation. Quality, quality improvement and quality control have become major aspects of our medical profession. And their importance is expected to further increase during the upcoming years. A PubMed search revealed a steep increase with an absolute record of medical publications on “quality improvement” in 2017 (Fig. 1). And this number will continue to increase in 2018. In the current issue of *Acta Gastroenterologica Belgica* you will find several manuscripts on quality of medical care in the field of Gastroenterology and Hepatology. Two position statements aim to improve quality of care in the field of IBD with the introduction and use of biosimilars in Belgium, and in the management of NAFLD in the field of Hepatology (1,2). They will provide optimal professional guidance for your daily clinical practice and medical patient care. However, Macken *et al.* report on the rather poor quality of colonoscopy in Belgium, with low rates of resected colonic polyp recuperation for pathological analysis and too short intervals between follow-up colonoscopies (3). Since these results were extracted from the national reimbursement data, they implicate overuse of colonoscopy with pursuit of financial profit. Unfortunately, this is not the message to be given to the government in the current atmosphere of health care cost savings. As a professional organisation of gastroenterologists we should draw our conclusions and take adequate measures to guard quality in endoscopy before the government does.

A medical journal like *Acta Gastroenterologica Belgica* also aims to maintain and even increase the quality of scientific publishing. This is a challenge for every medical journal due to the increasing number of scientific journals and the ongoing adagio “publish or perish”, which accounts for both the authors and the publishers (4). Medical journals are continuously increasing their quality requirements for submitted manuscripts, rendering the threshold for acceptance higher and higher. The Editorial Board of *Acta Gastroenterologica Belgica* is a task force aiming to separate the good from the bad and to further increase the quality of those manuscripts potentially acceptable for publication. We would like to thank all Associate Editors for their continuous effort for and dedication to our journal.

Quality is an important aspect of scientific publishing, medical patient care and health care organisation, as

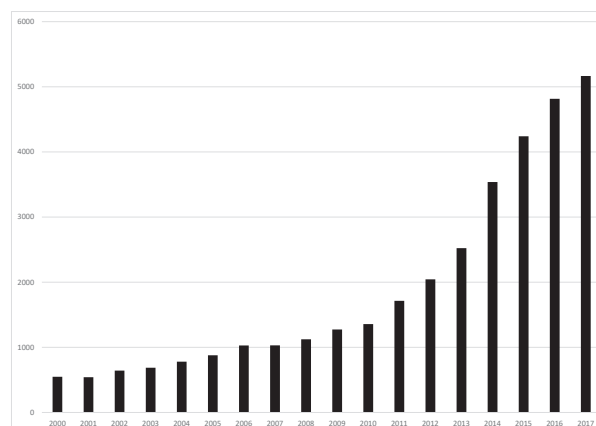


Figure 1. — Bargraph illustrating the number of medical publications on “Quality improvement” in PubMed per year since 2000 (PubMed accessed on 01 January 2018).

illustrated by numerous cases of scientific and clinical misconduct (4). And we, as health care professionals, must give high priority to good clinical practice and medical ethics. However, with the ongoing quest for accreditation of hospitals according to foreign standards in combination with more stringent health care regulations imposed by the federal government, we risk to tip the balance and to lose all common sense. Quality improvement in medicine. Yes, as long as these efforts are based on common sense. Besides all quality indicators, ethical concerns and accreditation issues, we should not forget that the beauty of our profession primarily relies on common sense...

On behalf of the Editorial Board of *Acta Gastroenterologica Belgica*, we wish you above all a beautiful year 2018 !

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