



Navigating a Startup Journey: The Journal of Medical Toxicology

Christian Tomaszewski¹

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Launching and nurturing a startup in any field is a perilous journey. In the realm of medical publishing competition for submissions and readers can be fierce. In 2005, there were already several journals (toxicology, pharmacology, and emergency medicine) to publish work in clinical toxicology. That's what makes the story of the *Journal of Medical Toxicology (JMT)* an outstanding success.

In 2005, Dr. Kevin Osterhoudt laid the groundwork for the first issue of JMT. It had just transitioned from the *Internet Journal of Medical Toxicology (IJMT)* into a tangible print product. The subsequent year, with the assistance of Dr. Scott Phillips, the reins were passed to a new editorial team, marking the beginning of a transformative journey.

Every journey initially needs financing, a common hurdle for many startups. Fortunately, with the backing of the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) and the sponsorship of the University of Pennsylvania Press, along with strategic print advertising, *JMT* found its footing. Yet, the true wealth lay in the dedication and expertise of its volunteer editorial team, including luminaries like Drs. Kevin Osterhoudt, Leslie Dye, and Scott Phillips. We even had an English literature expert on board, Sean Kullman, as managing editor, whose column “Art of Toxicology,” encouraged our authors with tips on improving their writing skills.

Having established a sustainable foundation, the next frontier was scalability. Recognition by the National Library of Medicine (NLM), with acceptance onto PubMed in 2008, marked a pivotal moment in *JMT's* ascent. This validation affirmed *JMT's* status as a credible scientific journal

and opened doors to multiple medical libraries, substantially expanding the audience for our contributors. The real heroes in this transformation were the authors who provided the much-needed content for NLM review, not knowing if their work would ever be read or cited; but luckily, Medline indexing was retroactive to our 2005 inaugural issue thereby including all their work.

As submissions surged, embracing technological innovations became imperative. Transitioning to an online editing program revolutionized the editorial workflow, facilitating seamless processing from submission to publication. Furthermore, partnering with the renowned publisher Springer in 2009 extended *JMT's* reach globally. They offered real-time online publication, shades of our progenitor *IJMT*, heralding a new era of accessibility and efficiency. We knew we had succeeded as a medical journal when we began to reject more manuscripts that we accepted, steering away from our old mantra, “if it fits, we print it.”

Reflecting on my five-year tenure (2006–11) as editor-in-chief marked by milestones and memorable contributions, one particular manuscript epitomizes *JMT's* impact. Early on, one of our authors, a 17-year-old high school student, was interviewed on national news offering a simple yet potential solution to the Anthrax scare. His study, published in *JMT*, showed that a dry hot iron could kill 100% of *Bacillus* spores [1]. The interviewer actually made an astute observation: “So...back in 2001, the federal government was spending millions...to decontaminate mail, and all they needed was an iron?” Such moments not only underscored *JMT's* commitment to innovation but also highlighted its real-world recognition.

In any industry where longevity is elusive and survival is the exception, *JMT's* resilience and growth are laudatory. From expanding its social media presence to launching a dedicated app and podcasts, *JMT* continues to evolve, ensuring its relevance in an ever-changing landscape. As we look ahead to the next chapter of *JMT's* journey, buoyed

Supervising Editor: Mark B. Mycyk, MD.

✉ Christian Tomaszewski
ctomaszewski@health.ucsd.edu

¹ Department of Emergency Medicine, University of California San Diego Health, 200 W Arbor Dr, 92103 San Diego, CA, USA

by a legacy of excellence and a commitment to impactful research, the future shines brighter than ever. As Carl Sagan aptly noted, “extinction is the rule; survival is the exception”—and our successful startup, the *Journal of Medical Toxicology*, stands as a testament to the exceptional.

Declarations

Competing Interests The author has no conflict of interest to disclose.

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1. Roberge MR. Bacillus spores in the mail: ironing out the anthrax problem. *J Med Toxicol.* 2006;2(2):64–7.

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