

The role of journals in raising awareness and changing practice in MASLD

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Executive Editor, *The Lancet*

Paris MASH meeting 2025

What is the role of journals in 2025?



- To peer review and disseminate original research and maintain the integrity of the scientific record
- To publish news, opinion, and thought leadership
- To foster discussion and debate
- To educate
- To help shape the culture of medicine, science, and research

How do we see our role at *The Lancet*?

...all those things, plus:

- To use the journal's own voice to advocate for change
- To serve as an instrument not just for scientific progress but also health equity and social justice
- To hold leaders and policymakers accountable

THE
LANCET



Why is all this important?

- ~ 1/3 of the population has MASLD
- Global prevalence of overweight and obesity has doubled between 1990 and 2021
- > 800 million people worldwide with diabetes (NCD-RisC), most living in LMICs
- NCDs will cost the global economy 30 trillion USD from 2011-2030
- NCD Countdown reveals large disparities in NCD mortality by country and sex

Editorial

Can we turn the tide on NCDs in 2025?

In 2011, the UN Political Declaration on Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Prevention and Control announced a target date of 2025 to reduce rates of premature mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes by 25%—the so-called 25×25 goal. 10 years later, the global probability of prematurely dying from one of those targeted NCDs had improved by only 1.5%. NCDs are the leading causes of premature death and disability

provides accountability on the NCD targets. It estimated that the most efficient packages of health interventions necessary to reduce premature NCD mortality by a third—such as aspirin for suspected acute coronary syndrome, cervical cancer screening and treatment, and transfat elimination policies—will cost US\$18 billion invested annually up to 2030. This investment would save 39 million lives and provide an estimated net return of \$2.7 trillion. An estimated \$3.7 trillion could be generated



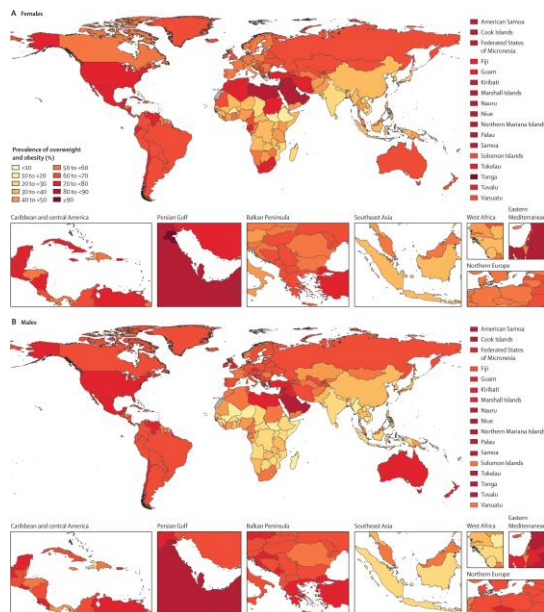
Health and the dis- and misinformation landscape



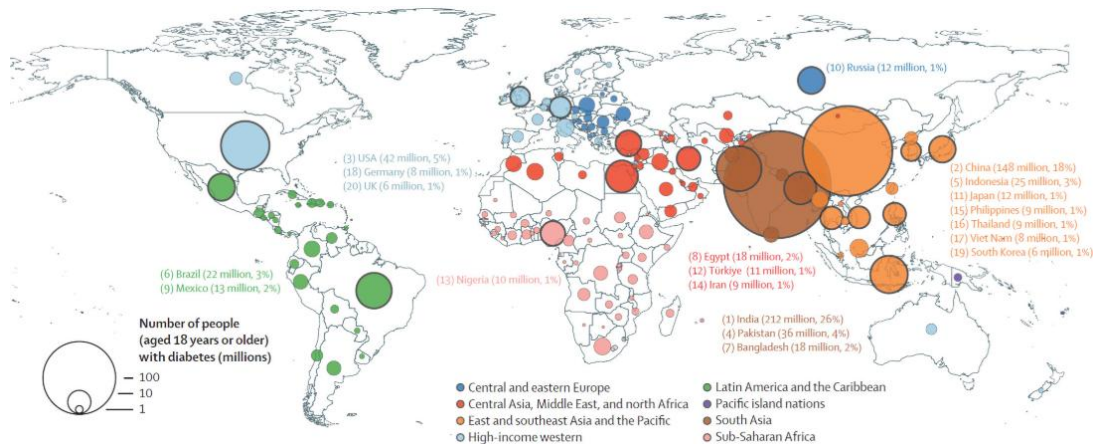
- COVID-19 pandemic has fuelled an explosion in health dis/misinformation, extending far beyond vaccines
- RFK Jr and US administration actively dismantling health institutions, global health funding, and vital research programmes
- MAHA report citing non-existent studies
- Wider research integrity crisis, now facilitated by generative AI

**Robust medical research – and therefore journals –
have never been more important**

Poor metabolic health is a global problem requiring global solutions



Overweight/obesity prevalence
in 2021 (GBD)



Diabetes prevalence
in 2022 (NCD-RisC)

Understanding health disparities through transparent reporting

communications medicine

Article



<https://doi.org/10.1039/s43856-024-00649-x>

Disparities in steatosis prevalence in the United States by Race or Ethnicity according to the 2023 criteria



Luis Antonio Diaz^{1,2,3,4}, Jeffrey V. Lazarus^{4,5,6}, Eduardo Fuentes-López⁷, Francisco Idalsoga^{2,8}, Gustavo Ayares⁹, Hailemichael Desalegn¹⁰, Pojsakorn Danpanichkul¹¹, Thomas G. Cotter¹², Winston Dunn¹³, Francisco Barrera¹⁴, Kam Wijampreecha^{15,16,17}, Mazen Noureddin¹⁸, Naim Alkhouri¹⁹, Ashwani K. Singal²⁰, Robert J. Wong²¹, Zohair M. Younossi^{22,23,24}, Mary E. Rinella²⁵, Patrick S. Kamath²⁶, Ramon Bataller²⁷, Rohit Loomba²⁸, Marco Arrese^{29,30} & Juan Pablo Arab^{10,31,32}

Upcoming webinars

The importance of analysing, reporting, and interpreting data according to sex and gender

[The importance of analysing, reporting, and interpreting data according to sex and gender](#)

Oct 21, 2025
14:00 BST / 09:00 EDT

This Lancet Webinar explores The Lancet Group's guidance on reporting sex- and gender-based analyses in submitted papers. Our expert editors will give an introduction to the importance of sex- and gender-based analyses, describe the requirements of the SAGER guidelines, provide examples of well-analysed published research, and discuss practical tips and answer questions from attendees.

[Register now](#)

[Reporting race and ethnicity data in Lancet journals: a pathway to improving health outcomes and equity in research and clinical practice](#)

Oct 23, 2025
11:00 BST / 12:00 CEST

This Lancet Webinar explores The Lancet Group's guidance on reporting race and ethnicity, which aims to increase transparency and clinical relevance, and reduce bias in publishing for better health outcomes. Our expert editors will discuss how disaggregating race and ethnicity data can reveal and help tackle health inequities, provide practical tips for all articles, and answer questions from attendees.

[Register now](#)

thelancet.com/webinars

Table 1. SAGER guidelines checklist
Studies with human participants

Section / Item	Item number	Checklist item	Response (page number)
General	1	The terms sex and gender are used appropriately	
	2	This specifies the sex and gender of participants if only one is included	
Abstract	3a	Abstract specifies the sex and gender of participants if only one is included	
	3b	Body population described with sex and gender breakdown	
Introduction	4a	If relevant, previous studies that show presence or lack of sex/gender differences in outcomes are cited	
	4b	Monitors of whether sex and gender might be an important cause and if differences might be expected	
	4c	The demographics of the study population with regard to sex and gender (e.g. disease prevalence among male/female study participants) are outlined	
	4d	Method of definition of sex and gender (e.g. self-report, genetic testing)	
Methods	5a	Discussion of how sex and gender was considered in the design, whether authors ensured adequate representation of male and female study participants, justification of the reasons for any exclusions of male or female participants, or explanation of how considered justification of other sex and gender-specific limitations of study design (e.g. monitoring, interpretation for women)? Explain reporting of the scientific outcome for	
	5b		

CC-BY SAGER Guidelines Checklist

Ensuring global health research is carried out equitably

Comment

Countering helicopter research with equitable partnerships



In April, 2023, we at *The Lancet Global Health* clarified our aims and scope, to explicitly state that "[w]e are committed to addressing the decolonising agenda in global health." We strongly believe that control and leadership of global health research should be in the hands of academics, clinicians, and communities in the locations of study. When this power is held elsewhere, the outcome is often helicopter research.

Helicopter research—otherwise known as parachute or parasitic research—is when researchers from high-income countries (HICs) arrive in a low-income or middle-income country (LMIC), conduct a study without involving researchers based in that country, then leave.

communities in the locations of study, and involved researchers with the necessary contextual knowledge when designing and implementing their work. They advised that journals have a responsibility to leverage their power to promote equitable inclusion. We agree.

In response, we are now piloting a new statement to be published as an appendix alongside research

Articles: the equitable partnership declaration (EPD; appendix). The EPD form asks detailed questions about the research partnerships in the studies, exploring how the research affects and is shaped by researchers, communities, and environments in the study settings. We will request an EPD for all studies conducted within

For more on our aims and scope
see <https://www.thelancet.com/length/about>

See Online for appendix

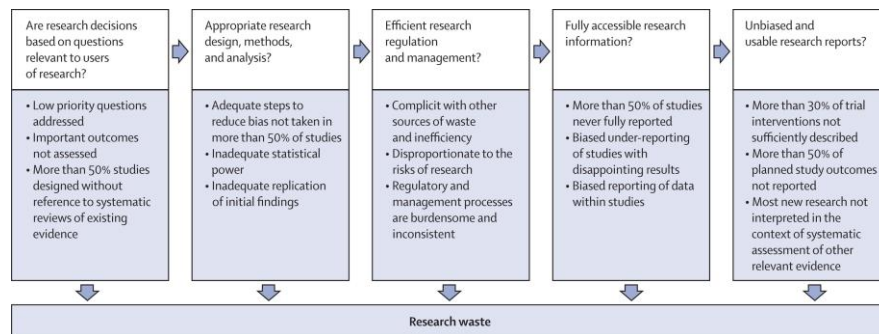
Equitable partnership declaration

The authors of this paper have submitted an equitable partnership declaration (appendix 2). This statement allows researchers to describe how their work engages with researchers, communities, and environments in the countries of study. This statement is part of *The Lancet Global Health's* broader goal to decolonise global health.

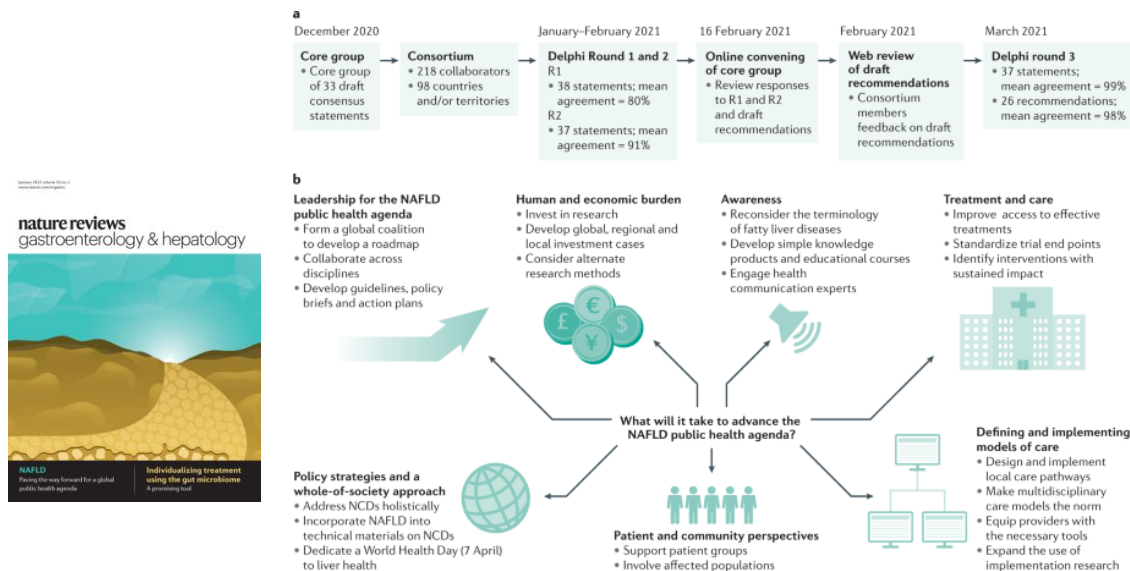
- How were local communities and researchers involved?
- How will the research benefit and be shared with the community?
- Does the research address local priorities?
- How was the local community protected from harm?

Setting the highest standards in clinical research to change practice

- Editors have a duty to protect the integrity of the scientific record, but also to minimize research waste
- Editors frequently need to ask authors to resolve selective reporting and 'spin'
- Editors occasionally need to resolve research integrity issues
- *Lancet* papers undergo detailed post-acceptance editing to ensure clear messaging and transparent reporting



Journals as a forum to raise awareness of MASLD and liver health



Lazarus, J.V., Mark, H.E., Anstee, Q.M. *et al.*
 Advancing the global public health agenda for NAFLD: a consensus statement. *Nat Rev Gastroenterol Hepatol* **19**, 60–78 (2022)

Shifting the dial on NCDs will require clear and consistent messaging...

THE LANCET *Regional Health* Europe

Health Policy

A call for doubling the diagnostic rate of at-risk metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis

Jeffrey V. Lazarus,^{a,b,c,*} Paul N. Brennan,^d Henry E. Mark,^e William Alkazawi,^f Alina M. Allen,^g Christopher D. Byrne,^h Laurent Costera,^h Cyrielle Caussy,ⁱ Kenneth Cusi,^j Martin M. Grajower,^k Christopher J. Kopka,^l Jo Massoels,^m Michael Roden,^{n,o} C. Wendy Spearman,^o Frank Tacke,^h Vincent Wai-Sun Wong,^h and Mazen Nouredin^o



theguardian

Millions in west do not know they have aggressive fatty liver disease, study says

Research finds more than 15m in US, UK, Germany and France with MASH have not been diagnosed

THE LANCET Global Health

Obesity is a disease: global health policy must catch up

Obesity is a chronic, biologically driven, and progressive disease. It contributes to more than 200 health conditions, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and multiple cancers.¹ Yet in global policy, it remains largely invisible. The 2018 UN High-Level Meeting Political Declaration on non-communicable diseases

and 2030 in LMICs.² Women, children, and living in poverty are disproportionately affected to unequal exposure to risk factors and limited care. For example, in Africa, obesity rates among women are nearly triple those of men and the female population will have obesity by 2030.

Panel: Priority actions for the global obesity response

Recognise obesity as a disease

Embed it in global and national frameworks to drive funding, accountability, and integration.

Regulate food environments

Enforce fiscal and marketing policies to reduce harm and promote healthy diets.

Integrate obesity into primary care

Ensure affordable, equitable access to care, including obesity management medication.

Tackle weight stigma and discrimination

Implement anti-discrimination policies in health systems and beyond.

Invest in the health systems of low-income and middle-income countries

Support capacity building, workforce training, and sustainable treatment access.

...and journals can help to craft this

Lancet Commissions



To capture the energy + expertise of the academic community to catalyse change



Science-led



Fully independent



Go further and faster than many multi-lateral attempts



Actionable recommendations for progress



Unacceptable failures: the final report of the Lancet Commission into liver disease in the UK

Roger Williams, Gunpreet Aithal, Graeme J Alexander, Michael Allison, Iain Armstrong, Richard Aspinall, Alastair Baker, Rachel Batterham, Katrina Brown, Robyn Burton, Matthew E Cramp, Natalie Day, Anil Dhawan, Colin Drummond, James Ferguson, Graham Foster, Ian Gilmore, Jonny Greenberg, Clive Hens, Helen Jarvis, Deirdre Kelly, Mead Mathews, Annie McCloud, Alastair MacGillchrist, Martin McKee, Kieran Moriarty, Joanne Morling, Philip Newsome, Peter Rice, Stephen Roberts, Harry Rutter, Marianne Samyn, Katherine Severi, Nick Sheron, Douglas Thorburn, Julia Verne, Jyotsna Vohra, John Williams, Andrew Yeaman

Journals and editors must use their own voice to call for change

Editorial

US health policy: the Senate must act

During his [confirmation hearings](#), Robert F. Kennedy Jr, now Head of US Health and Human Services (HHS), gave repeated reassurances to senators concerned about his credentials and beliefs. He promised that health plans would be based on sound evidence and that vaccination recommendations would continue to be made in an open and transparent manner. He committed to clearly communicating the scientific basis for decisions and to "gold standard, evidence-based science". "I want to empower scientists." "I will bring radical transparency to

country has been captured by a handful of extremists and dilettantes, determined to pursue their personal agenda, irrespective of consensus building or administrative process. It is an administration built not on scientific understanding but on conspiracy theory. What elements might make up a coordinated and organised counter-narrative? Provision of independent expert advice can help ensure the public have access to the best evidence-based information and enable scrutiny of the administration's actions. Attention must be given



Editorial

The dialogue around NCDs needs to change

In our first Editorial of 2025, we wrote that, to turn the tide on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the pernicious influence and lobbying of health-harming industries must be confronted and overcome. 43 million lives are lost every year to NCDs, and up to 80% of these deaths could be prevented. 82% of premature deaths from NCDs occur in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). Three previous UN High-level Meetings

entities focus their attention on this age group through social media, billboards, and sports events advertising. Consumption of SSBs has increased by 89% in sub-Saharan Africa. Obesity in adolescence is a risk factor for many NCDs during adolescence and later life. The growing preponderance of NCDs in young people is deeply concerning and should prompt a strong political response.



The Lancet Group

192,812 followers

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There is a great cost to silencing science.

"The Trump administration's actions are not simply domestic political manoeuvres; they are part of a global assault on evidence, inclusion, and truth", states a new Comment in The Lancet.

As members of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), journal editors and The Lancet's Sabine Kleinert speak out: "Scientists, scientific organisations, and editors must resist silence."

hubs.li/Q03w-KW60

Comment

Global cost of silencing science: editors and publishers have a duty to resist



Public trust in scientific integrity is eroded by the politicisation of institutions under Donald Trump's US presidency. The implications extend far beyond American borders, striking at the core of how scientific knowledge is produced, disseminated, and trusted worldwide.

Recent directives seek to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, cut federal funding to critical health research agencies, and restrict references to gender, race, and climate science in official documentation.

the ICMJE's call to promote diversity in authorship, peer review, and research design, they endanger public health. Inclusive research is not ideological; it is essential. Populations historically marginalised in science—including women, people of colour, and LGBTQ+ individuals—will again be pushed to the periphery. This regression has tangible consequences for the scientific validity and societal relevance of health research. The rollback of DEI initiatives risks deepening existing health

Published Online
July 21, 2025
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(25\)01429-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(25)01429-1)

The New York Times

3 Out of 5 Liver Cancer Cases Are Preventable, Study Finds

Without efforts to address some causes, including alcohol use and metabolic issues, the researchers warn that cases could nearly double by 2050.



Liver cancer cases are projected to double, but more than half could be preventable

Obesity-related liver cancers are the fastest-growing cause of the disease.

Forbes

Liver Cancer Cases Are On The Rise. Here's How To Avoid Getting It

The Indian EXPRESS

3 in 5 liver cancer cases due to preventable risk factors, obesity-linked cases spiralling, says Lancet study: Why our lifestyle matters even more

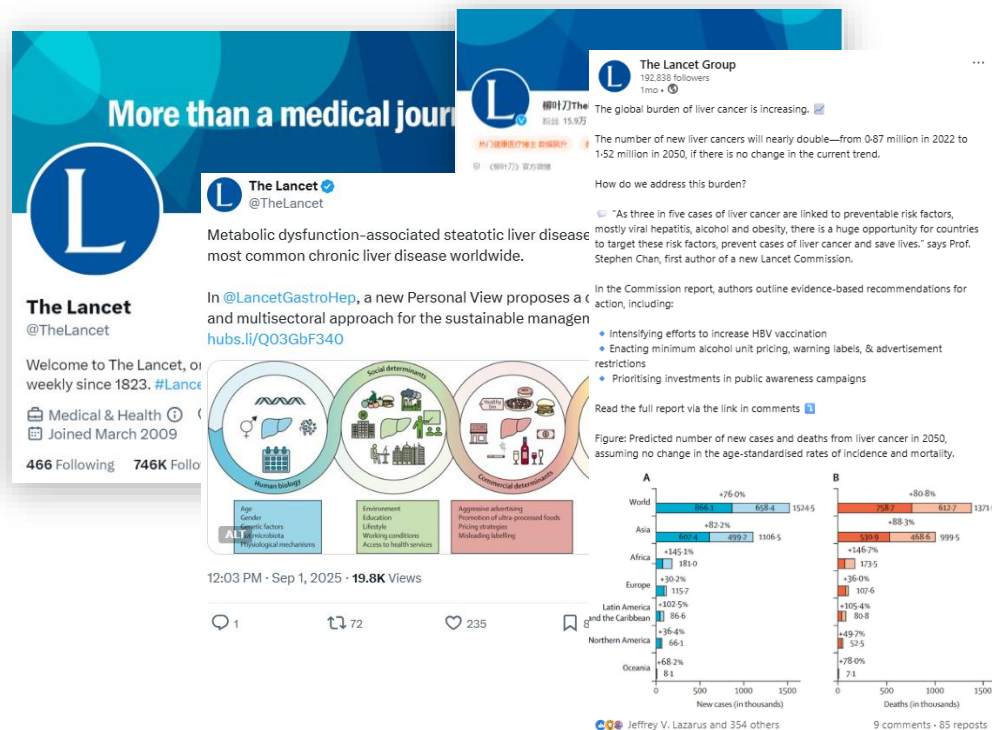
Bloomberg

Astra, Merck Drugs Set to Shake Up Liver Cancer Treatment

Two late-stage studies published Wednesday in [The Lancet](#) show that Astra's Imfinzi and Merck's Keytruda delayed the progress of liver cancer when combined with other drugs and a local treatment.

...and social media

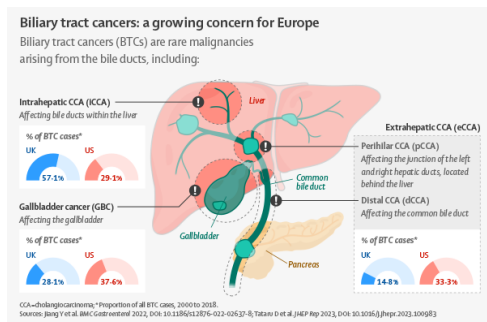
Lancet journals have nearly **2.8 million followers** on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn, WeChat, Instagram, Weibo, Little red book, and YouTube



Multimedia can help to promote visibility and accessibility



Podcasts



Infographics



Sequential use of immune checkpoint inhibitors in renal cell carcinoma

The Lancet • 804 views • 2 years ago



Determining the efficiency path to universal health coverage

The Lancet • 1.3K views • 2 years ago



Efficacy

The Lancet



The Lancet Series on Heart Failure Prevention

The Lancet • 2K views • 5 days ago



Inequalities and Disparities in Cardiovascular Health

The Lancet • 465 views • 9 days ago



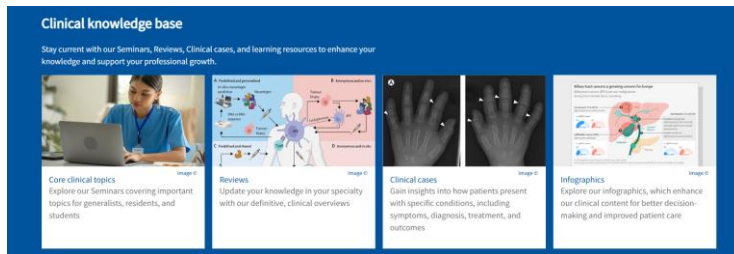
Childhood vaccination: achieving global coverage

The Lancet • 720 views • 2 months ago

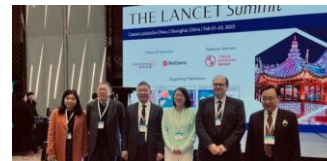
Videos

How else can journals help to raise awareness and change practice?

- Patient, public, and lived experience engagement
- Medical education resources



- Conferences and events



Summary

- Journals are more than just repositories of research articles
- Science is the ultimate accountability mechanism – reliable data allow us to hold leaders and policymakers to account, but disinformation impedes this
- Journals can facilitate and incentivize cross-discipline and cross-border collaboration to tackle global challenges like MASLD
- Journals have a role in ensuring research is more widely read and understood, including by patients and the public
- *At The Lancet*, we strive for partnership between journals and the research community – and don't want journals to be 'black boxes'. Journals depend on you for ideas – please do reach out

Thank you!

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