

Launching Genomica

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Genetics and genomics reshaped our lives over the last decades and is expected to impact us also in the future, until some point when the survival of our species will depend on this knowledge.

When I started to learn in the Primary School about genetics, I realized that this is the path of understand how biological life works and after 28 years from that point, I am still amazed by the complexity of the living matter processes.

So, curiosity and the inner need to understand the big picture (at least in biology, genetics, and genomics) was a big trigger for me. Not so when I decided to set up this journal. Rather, this last need comes from a series of grievances.

In the last decade Romania has reduce its budget allocations for research and development almost by half (1) and thus in 2022 Romania was the country with the lowest budget for research and development per person (17,6 euro) from UE (2), although the general trend was towards increasing these allocations.

In the same period the public opinion was marked by numerous PhD plagiarism scandals (~ 50 cases exposed) among Romanian elites (3,4) and the trust in the academic institutions drastically dropped.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us a lot about the manipulation of information of public interest and that social media feeds conspiracy theories and pseudoscience. In this environment, the opinion of scientists is frequently denied or diluted until complete elimination.

In this context, a lot of promising researchers chose to migrate from Romania to countries with better research possibilities or sank into obscurity. In Romania the feeling of the near end for science was and still is present everywhere.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has played an important role in accelerating the implementation of sequencing technologies and those associated with nucleic acid analysis (PCR, Real-Time PCR, etc.) on an unprecedented scale for Romania. Somehow, this is a paradox, because we have purchased a lot of diagnostic equipment to combat SARS-COV 2, which can also be used in research, but there is no real will or financial resources for this.

Despite all off that, there are some incurable optimistic or maybe just masochistic persons (as myself), who believe that in hard times good opportunities arise and strong characters are build. In this case we can also replace "characters" with "scientific tools" or "scientific journals".

The idea of a peer-reviewed and bilingual scientific journal in Romania arose also as a result of a local vacuum regarding the academic framework for publishing scientific results from genetics and genomics.

So far, scientists in these fields have chosen to publish their results in international journals. There are few Romanian journals that have survived over time and are sometimes used as alternatives (non-specific or general) for results from genetics and genomics studies, such as: [Romanian Journal of Legal Medicine](#), [Romanian Biotechnological Letters](#), [Romanian Journal of Morphology and Embryology](#) or [Romanian Journal of Laboratory Medicine](#). We should all be grateful for these scientific journals, because without them there was no local alternative.

The name chosen for this scientific journal – *Genomica* – is a bold one, because I expect that in the future all genetic analyses will start with a "routine" sequencing step. When the costs of Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology will drop sufficiently, it will be cheaper and easier to sequence "everything" instead of certain areas of the genome that require additional steps and costs.

It's also a personal bet on a growing field. Genomics is already and will be present in many practical fields (ecology, medicine, forensic DNA typing, etc.) as a tool to solve various specific problems. The genomics of the future will also come packed with plenty of Big Data and AI support services.

In the end I have realistic expectations. These changes will come gradually, and I expect that at first the *Genomica* articles will be more about genetics and less about genomics. But I also believe that in the future this trend will definitely reverse.

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I hope there will be other scientists who will join *Genomica* journey, because the task of keeping a journal "alive" at high scientific and publishing standards will not be an easy one.

Anyway, it's worth doing the best we can, especially when technology and projects like OJS (5) come in the help of those who are willing to try.

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