



2025: a year in summary, and expectations for 2026

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2025 was a year of both consolidation and expansion for the *Impact Health Publishing Group* (<https://impact-journals.org>). Alongside continued growth of our flagship *Impact Surgery*, we launched *Impact Case Reports* and *Impact Public Health*, extending the group's scope across clinical outcomes, systems, and implementation research. Looking ahead to 2026, the group will embark on the journey of formal registrations with the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ) and *PubMed Central*. These steps are essential for long-term credibility and visibility, but they also carry substantial operational costs. As a result, and in the interest of transparency, we anticipate the introduction of an author publication charge at that stage, complimented by ethical sponsorship and advertising. Our commitment is to deliver what we describe as the “*EasyJet experience*” for authors: a reliable, efficient, and professional publishing process, at a lower cost than premium journals, without compromising editorial standards or integrity.

2025 was also important for its wider global health context. The publication of the *Lancet Surgical Health Policy 2025-2030* article highlighted the central role of surgery within health systems worldwide, and *Impact Surgery's* community should read it¹. However, this progress was overshadowed by major political uncertainty, including changes in United States leadership and subsequent, severe reductions in global health funding. In this environment, sustained advocacy for surgical access and research is more important than ever.

Technologically, 2025 saw further acceleration of robotics and digitally enabled surgery. *Impact Surgery*

addressed this inflection point directly in its first Special Edition (Issue 13), which brought together original research and implementation-focused analyses on robotic platforms, training models, and system-level consequences²⁻⁷. Building on this momentum, we are preparing a *Surgery 4.0* Special Edition for 2026, focused on robotics, artificial intelligence, data-driven pathways, and digitally integrated surgical systems. Submissions for this issue will close on 30th June 2026.

Dissemination will also take a step forward in 2026. We are planning the first *Impact Surgery Innovation Conference*, planned as a two-day digital-first event in December 2026, with a target audience of at least 1,000 online participants. Day one will focus on abstract presentations and emerging work, while day two will serve as the flagship programme, featuring keynote lectures, late-breaking trial results, and system-level discussions

From a research perspective, 2026 promises important developments. Robotics will continue to mature as a system-level intervention rather than a technical add-on. Sustainable surgery will gain stronger empirical footing, including results from trials such as DRAGON. Progress in understanding appendicitis, including insights from the ALLIGATOR programme, will change daily surgical decision making around the world. The completion of the COVIDSurg programme of studies will close a defining chapter in collaborative surgical research⁸. Alongside this, new work in personalised wound closure, surgical systems design, and robotic integration will shape the next phase of evidence generation. There will hopefully be many more outputs from a wide surgical



community that will, in combination, boost the quality of patient care.

Ultimately, the success of *Impact Surgery* in 2026 will be measured by its community rather than citations or submissions alone. As the Impact Health Publishing Group expands, and with the anticipated launch of *Impact Digital Health* and *Impact GI Medicine and Surgery*, the opportunity is to create a coherent home for authors, focused on innovation, technology and clinical outcomes. Our expectation for the year ahead is to continue to grow and engage.

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