

EDITORIAL

Transformation

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The *BDJ* Upfront section includes editorials, letters, news, book reviews and interviews. Please direct your correspondence to the News Editor, Kate Quinlan at k.quinlan@nature.com. Press releases or articles may be edited, and should include a colour photograph if possible.

The *BDJ* has a history spanning three centuries, 19th, 20th and 21st, meaning that next year we will be celebrating its 150th birthday – a remarkable milestone for a venerable publication. But age has in no way diminished the appetite for change, and arguably the past two decades have produced, as a direct result of the advent of the internet, some of the most radical steps in its journey. One of these developments means that we are now able to announce that the *BDJ* has become what is termed a Transformative Journal (TJ). This has some exciting and potentially very beneficial effects for all the journal's stakeholders.

Online publication which began as merely reproducing print versions in electronic form has, thanks to creativity and economics, become a world of its own. One of the consequent innovations is Open Access (OA) publishing, which is content that is freely available to anyone with access to the internet. This, in turn, has generated the argument that all research should be OA for the benefit of humankind rather than shuttered off behind paywalls and subscriptions. However, this means that the costs are borne by authors, usually in the form of an 'article processing charge' (APC) typically covered by their research funding.

Within our portfolio, the *BDJ* publishes both types of research, making it a 'hybrid' journal, while *BDJ Open*, as the name suggests, is wholly OA content and which we launched in 2015 in anticipation of this trend. Despite the growing number of articles being published OA, there has been general frustration among funders that the pace of change has not been faster. Some (for example, the Wellcome Trust in the UK) have attempted to address this by mandating OA publishing for the outputs of research projects that they fund. These efforts received increased impetus in 2018 when a group of national research funding institutions came together to form cOAlition S, with the

aim of making 'full and immediate Open Access to research publications a reality'. They produced 'Plan S', which stated the following target: '*With effect from 2021, all scholarly publications on the results from research funded by public or private grants provided by national, regional and international research councils and funding bodies, must be published in Open Access Journals, on Open Access Platforms, or made immediately available through Open Access Repositories without embargo.*'

In particular, cOAlition S objected to hybrid journals, which they felt were an impediment to the transition to full OA and simply a way for publishers to perpetuate the subscription model while paying lip service to the principles of open research. Springer Nature, the publisher of the *BDJ*, has engaged actively with cOAlition S,

for the former and research funding for the latter. TAs (sometimes called Read and Publish agreements) bring these two types of payment together in one contract. This typically gives the institution access to the full range of subscription content but also covers the cost of an agreed number of APCs for authors in that institution. For authors, this has the effect of making OA publication 'free' (because the APC is covered centrally by the institution) while maintaining access to all the subscription content. Additionally, because all APCs are paid from a central source, funding is made more widely available, including for authors in fields where it has traditionally been scarce, such as in dentistry. Of particular relevance to the *BDJ* is that a TA is now in operation in the UK which includes



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resulting in the acceptance by the latter of the concept of the TJ as a hybrid journal that proactively promotes the benefits of OA to increase uptake, while supporting any author who wishes to publish in the journal, regardless of their funding situation. Thus, a TJ commits, among other things, to continuously increase the OA share each year and to 'flip' to full OA for primary research once a 75% threshold has been met, and to maximise take-up of the OA option by proactively promoting the benefits of OA to authors of primary research articles.

Alongside TJs, the other key element of the Springer Nature strategy is the concept of Transformative Agreements (TAs). Frequently, although the money for subscriptions and APCs comes from the same institution, it is paid from different budgets; library budgets

almost all dental schools. Full information is available on this link: <https://www.springer.com/gp/open-access/springer-open-choice/springer-compact/agreements-uk-authors>

In short, this move to the *BDJ* becoming a TJ, approved by the BDA's Principal Executive Committee earlier this year, holds great potential for the journal to further increase its digital international reach and reputation for the benefit of readers, authors and the dental literature as a whole. How soon the 75% OA content is reached is difficult to estimate. It is probably some years away, but the important aspect is the commitment to aim for this transformation while also continuing to develop the value of the journal both in print and online for all users. ■

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