Editorial

Open Access, the Creative Commons Attribution Licence, and the Nutrition Society journals*

(First published online 25 October 2012)

Open Access

Increasing numbers of research funders, including the Wellcome Trust, Research Councils UK, and the National Institutes of Health, require that articles published from the work that they fund are “Open Access”, meaning that they are made available to all readers without those readers needing to pay a subscription to the journal or a fee to gain access to the article. In the Open Access model of scientific publishing, the costs of publication are borne through a one-off payment from the author’s funding body or institution. Open Access publication has been available in both the British Journal of Nutrition and Public Health Nutrition for some time, although only a minority of articles published in these two journals are Open Access. Many of the authors who publish in the BJN and PHN are not required by their funders to adopt Open Access and many do not have access to the funds to do so voluntarily. Therefore, we continue to offer publication in the BJN and PHN through the traditional model. However, because we understand that Open Access is appealing to some authors, in collaboration with Cambridge University Press, the Nutrition Society recently launched a fully Open Access journal, Journal of Nutritional Science. However, it is also worth noting that, for over 12 years, the Nutrition Society has made the content of the BJN and PHN available for free to all users after 12 months.

Immediacy of availability of accepted papers

The ability to display and access articles electronically means it is now possible to make them available to readers prior to their publication in final form. For both the BJN and PHN, the final “Version of Record” of each accepted article is made available to subscribers, or in the case of an Open Access article, to all users, as soon as it is ready and before it is assigned to a specific issue of the journal. At this stage, the article is listed on PubMed and may be identified by searches, read and cited. This is a tremendous advantage to both authors and readers, because it means that the content of the article becomes available some time in advance of publication of the final version of the article. In fact, all that is missing from this final Version of Record is the volume and final page numbers of the article. Both the Version of Record and the final published version of the article share the same digital object identifier (“DOI number”) which is unique to each publication and aids citation of an article before its volume and page numbers are known. In parallel with their requirement for Open Access, some funders require that articles featuring work they have funded become freely available “at the time of publication”. For the BJN and PHN, the time of publication is interpreted to be when the final Version of Record is made available on-line.

Copyright, Licence to Publish and the Creative Commons Attribution Licence

Many journals require transfer of copyright of the content of the articles they publish from the author to a publisher or to an academic society. The Nutrition Society ceased using this model in its journals many years ago, with the introduction, in place of copyright transfer, of “licence to publish”. Under licence to publish, authors grant the Nutrition Society the exclusive right to publish the article and to reproduce and distribute it. Authors (or their institution) retain copyright. Many authors do not realise this, even though they have signed the licence to publish form, and even fewer probably know their rights under licence to publish. To quote from the form signed by authors: “You retain the right to use your own article (provided you acknowledge the published original in standard bibliographic citation form) as follows: for the internal educational or other purposes of your own institution or organisation; mounted on your own or your institution’s website; posted to free public servers of preprints and/or articles in your subject area; in whole or in part, as the basis for your own further publications or spoken presentations, although ideally not before 6 months have elapsed after publication”. Even under licence to publish, anyone who does not own copyright (i.e., normally anyone other than the authors) is required to request permission to use any of the content of a published article, for example in a presentation or in another publication, and the original source must be clearly and appropriately cited. In parallel with their requirement for

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Summary and conclusions

The conditions of publishing are changing with electronic advances creating both opportunities and challenges for funders, authors, readers, academic societies, institutions, librarians and publishers. Open Access is a revolution in the way that articles are published and made available to stakeholders. Funders are increasingly requiring that articles featuring research that they have supported be published according to the Open Access model, be placed in repositories that are freely accessible, and be subject to a Creative Commons Attribution Licence. Both the BJN and PHN have offered Open Access publication for some time, all publications in both journals are freely available to all users after 12 months, and JNS is fully Open Access. Articles published under Open Access in the BJN, PHN and JNS are subject to a form of Creative Commons Attribution Licence that permits others to copy, distribute and display the work and to adapt it, so long as attribution is given to the original author. Obviously this licence permits authors to place the Version of Record of their article in repositories. Authors of non-Open Access articles published in the BJN or PHN retain copyright under Licence to Publish, and this allows them to place the Version of Record of their article in repositories, although an embargo period of 6 months is suggested. At the current time authors meet requirements of funders by publishing in the BJN, PHN or JNS.

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doi:10.1017/S0007114512004928

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