

## EDITORIAL

## Goodbye from the Editor

Patricia Casey 

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**SUMMARY**

The outgoing Editor in Chief of *BJPsych Advances* considers the 30-year history of the journal, outlining its development from a slim four-paper issue to an authoritative publication offering blended learning approaches for consultant psychiatrists and also for trainees preparing for their examinations.

**KEYWORDS**

*BJPsych Advances*; editor; *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*; continuing professional development; history of journal.



It has been a privilege and an honour to edit *BJPsych Advances* for 10 or more years. It is a key contributor to consultant professional development and in 2023 had 1897 660 downloads from 226 countries around the world.

*Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, as it was originally called, was the brainchild of the late Professor Andrew Sims, who, with foresight and leadership, sought to bridge the much vaunted vacuum between academic psychiatry and clinical practice. This journal initiative was timely, as the need for continuing professional development (CPD) was beginning to ferment. Andrew was truly a prophet before his time!

The first issue in July 1994 contained just four papers. It was published bimonthly thereafter (and still is). The first three issues were sponsored by the Department of Health and sent free of charge to all members of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych). After that, the business model aspired to break even within 12 months. With the full support of Dave Jago, then Director of the Publications Department, and the appeal of the clinical content of the papers, the journal was an immense success. The journal sought to be independent by steering away from any form of advertisement or sponsorship. Within 10 years and under the editorship of the late Dr Alan Lee, the journal became an authoritative source for consultants and also for trainee psychiatrists preparing for their examinations. This success continued under the editorship of my colleague Dr Joe Bouch. I am pleased to say that this momentum

has continued and the journal has now expanded and diversified in various ways.

It is now accessible free of charge to all RCPsych members. This was a very large boost to its esteem among psychiatrists at large, made possible by the massive technological changes in publishing since the decades of *Advances*' founding. These have also made possible the publication of regular podcasts and links to other publications and CPD activities within the RCPsych's stable, most particularly the eLearning modules (formerly called CPD Online). This has ushered in blended learning approaches to topics, with cross-publication increasing significantly in the past 2 years.

Membership of the editorial board has grown from being UK and Ireland based to international, with members from every continent. This has also facilitated the translation of some of articles into other languages, further extending the journal's reach.

Over the years, various sections, additional to the usual longer review papers, have been added and then gone, to the inevitable disappointment of some readers. Nonetheless, the current crop, which include Cochrane Corner and the accompanying Round the Corner commentary, Refreshments and Clinical Reflections, have been the most enduring. Memory Lane, a review of classic and much-loved psychiatric texts, was initiated by my friend and editorial board member Professor Keith Rix just 2 years ago.

If the work involved in commissioning papers is any measure of success, then *Advances* has excelled itself. I have been relieved of actively seeking out topics and papers owing to the volume of unsolicited papers that we receive. In such an environment, maintaining our quality is essential. Submissions that are potentially of interest to our readership are rigorously reviewed by three peers. The high standard of our papers has ultimately led to the jewel in the crown when, in 2023, *Advances* was for the first time awarded an impact factor, an unfulfilled dream for many years.

Most readers are not aware of the time given to journal work by our colleagues but without their commitment and generosity there would be no editorial board and there would be no peer reviewers. There is no payment for these activities, just the accolade of having it on the CV. With the support of the editorial board the journal has expanded and the reviewers have striven assiduously to maintain its impeccable standard so that our knowledge

can be a reliable source as we respond to the needs of our patients.

I am handing over the mantle of Editor in Chief to a very distinguished Professor of Psychiatry of Intellectual Disability. I cannot think of a more suitable editor for this rapidly expanding journal than Professor Asit Biswas of the University of Leicester. He will be working with Anna Munks, Managing Editor of *Advances*, whose skill in navigating choppy waters when we have to manage controversial papers, plagiarism and delayed reviews (to mention but a few of our tribulations) has been unsurpassed. Professor Kam Bhui, former Editor in Chief of the *British Journal of Psychiatry (BJPsych)*, was my colleague with oversight of all the RCPsych's journals and he was a wise and insightful adviser in difficult situations. It was a great pleasure working with Dave Jago and

Andrew Morris when the RCPsych published all the journals. The transition to a publishing partnership with Cambridge University Press (CUP) in 2017 was made possible by the skill and sensitivity of Sarah Maddox, Publisher (STM Journals) at CUP. Thanks to her also, *Advances* now has an impact factor.

My work is done, and I am confident that Asit will ensure *Advances* will continue to be a premier source of up-to-date information and knowledge for practising consultant psychiatrists, as envisaged by Professor Sims three decades ago.

### **Declaration of interest**

P.C. is a member of the *BJPsych Advances* editorial board and former Editor in Chief of the journal and did not take part in the review or decision-making process of this paper.