

## BJPsych Editorial

# The *BJPsych* journals: open for business and faster than a speeding bullet in advancing psychiatry internationally

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**Summary**

The Royal College of Psychiatry journals have an outstanding reputation for excellence, integrity and impact in psychiatry. Facilitated by Cambridge University Press, which is equally steeped in tradition, the family of College journals remains committed to enriching our understanding of mental science and exploring the clinical issues that matter.

**Keywords**

*British Journal of Psychiatry; BJPsych Open; BJPsych Bulletin; BJPsych Advances; BJPsych International.*

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In addition to its top tier psychiatry journals, the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) publishes books, magazines (such as *Insight*) and a wide range of newsletters. It also hosts podcasts and webinars and collectively these educational materials capture the psychiatric understanding of researchers and the clinical wisdom of practising clinicians. This knowledge is then communicated alongside the day-to-day experiences of patients with mental illness. This editorial describes the scope of the College's portfolio of psychiatry journals and briefly highlights some of the benefits of having a family of academic journals.

**We are family**

If the BJPsych journals had an anthem, then perhaps the famous Sister Sledge song 'We are family' would be an apt choice. In addition to being a catchy and uplifting melody, the lyrics promote unity, togetherness and mutual care, and can apply to 'any group of people who align for the purpose of building each other up or accomplishing something for good'.<sup>1</sup> These themes resonate with the College ethos and the broad philosophical approach adopted by the journals. The ultimate aim of translating research into clinical practice requires all manner of pedagogy as part of academic and professional scholarship. To achieve this breadth of learning while maintaining sufficient depth of knowledge the journals draw on the expertise of their committed Board Members.

Within the family, the *BJPsych* has long been the go-to journal for psychiatric research of all kinds and during its long and illustrious history, articles in its pages have provided essential updates on contemporary topics and clinical practice guidance. Over time, as our understanding of psychiatry has evolved and the profession has become more sophisticated, the BJPsych family has steadily grown, and each new additional journal has endeavoured to develop a particular aspect of the field. Gradually, each member of the family has attained greater distinction while at the same time maintaining its critical BJPsych nexus. This delicate relationship can be seen in the online descriptions of the scope of each journal, which sketch out the broad aims of each publication.

Like its elder sibling, the *BJPsych Bulletin* features 'opinion and informed reflection', especially 'on the state of psychiatry' – meaning its condition and how it is faring. The journal gives priority to research, especially on aspects concerning the management of psychiatric

services. It also takes an active interest in the educational and training needs of professionals. Thus, it is accurately described as 'essential reading' and of 'practical value to psychiatrists and [indeed] anyone involved in the management and provision of mental healthcare'.

Although *BJPsych Bulletin* attends to education and training needs of psychiatrists, it is *BJPsych Advances* that is perhaps the lead publication in this arena. The latter is the family member that 'distils current clinical knowledge' and furnishes the 'continuing professional development (CPD) needs of consultant psychiatrists' as well as the needs of trainees. It achieves this by commissioning articles that are practical and have a clinical focus. These articles, which are often comprehensive reviews of a topic pertinent to clinical practice, are usually condensed into key points contained in summary boxes. To amplify the learning potential further, these highly informative pieces are usually accompanied by multiple choice questions that allow the reader to test their newly acquired knowledge. Learning is further enhanced by publishing associated commentaries that are linked thematically. This is why *BJPsych Advances* is indeed 'essential reading for practising mental health professionals' who need to keep abreast of current thinking and developments in the field.

Adding to the already diverse portfolio of BJPsych journals, the most cosmopolitan member of the family provides practitioners of all kinds from all parts of the world 'an overview of current policy and practice in psychiatry from a global perspective'. Specifically, *BJPsych International* aims to promote training in psychiatry across the planet and strives to achieve this suitably ambitious goal by engaging with 'developments of mental health policy' and 'novel approaches to the management of mental health services' in different regions of the world. In doing this it also fulfils another of its fundamental aims, namely to enable authors from low- and middle-income countries to publish their work and, like *BJPsych Advances*, it seeks to accommodate contributions from junior doctors and trainees.

In comparison with the rest of the portfolio, *BJPsych Open* is the fledgling of the family, although its growth and impact would suggest otherwise. Accommodating the transfer of suitable papers from the *BJPsych* and emulating its commitment to publishing scientific content of the highest quality, *BJPsych Open* creates online space for 'methodologically sound research in psychiatry and disciplines related to mental health'. Furthermore, on top of original research, such as clinical trials, the journal publishes research



**Fig. 1** The journals' write hand.

The figure depicts the connectedness of the journals and their relationship as a whole to the College and the publisher. To disseminate knowledge, the journals inevitably draw on College resources and make use of the support provided by the publisher. Together, the College and the publisher create the necessary space within which the journals can function and make knowledge available. However, importantly, the illustration also shows that the content of the journals is determined by each of the publications exerting their own unique influence, both individually (digits) and collectively (hand) as a whole.

protocols and reviews in a variety of styles, including, for example, systematic and narrative kinds.

### Family benefits

Although the scope of each of the journals has expanded, considerable overlap remains. This is inevitable given their common BJPsych ancestry. The advantage of this shared heritage is that it allows the interests of each of the journals to be linked, such that articles submitted to one journal can potentially cascade to another. In practice this means that if an Editor decides that an article may be better suited to another journal within the portfolio, they can propose that it be transferred. A paper transferred in this manner would be subject to the approval of the Editor in Chief of the journal to which the paper has been reassigned. Nevertheless, the strategy of transferring in-house is still of significant benefit to authors as it creates an additional opportunity for publication and perhaps one that the authors did not consider. Furthermore, transferring a paper is likely to be faster than having to submit the article elsewhere from scratch. This is partly because all the journals within the BJPsych portfolio are managed by a single publisher (Cambridge University Press) and are processed for submission and review using the same manuscript handling system (ScholarOne). Having procedural consistency such as this ensures the history of the paper is retained as it moves through the system and this helps expedite processing.

### Prestige, professionalism and probity

The journals are backed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and therefore, in addition to adhering to their own set of values, the BJPsych family also conforms to the values of the College. Accordingly, the association not only lends prestige to the journals but ensures professional standards are adhered to during the

publication process. These principles are strengthened further by having a publisher of some renown. Cambridge University Press (CUP), which publishes the RCPsych journals, is a fitting partner, because like the College and the BJPsych, it also has a long-standing history. Indeed, having been granted letters patent by King Henry VIII in 1534, CUP is the oldest university press in the world and is also the King's Printer. Thus, the journals are framed by a strong set of values – a useful brace in the current publishing milieu, where commercial and political interests hold burgeoning sway (Fig. 1).

### Conclusion

Together the five journals that constitute the BJPsych portfolio address the full spectrum of clinical issues that are likely to be of interest to practising psychiatrists. By examining and discussing the day-to-day work of clinicians, researchers and academics in psychiatry, the BJPsych journals provide valuable insights into what truly matters. At the same time, while communicating the essential know-how needed to become a proficient psychiatrist through clinical professional development, the journals attempt to ignite a keen interest in research and academia. Thus, in the process of enriching our understanding of psychiatry and keeping us informed of relevant advances in the field, the BJPsych portfolio ensures that it has something for everyone.

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### Data availability

Data availability is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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### Author contribution

G.S.M. researched, drafted and edited this manuscript and conceptualised the figure.

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### Reference

- 1 BANG Showbiz. Debbie Sledge talks We Are Family. *Yahoo News* 2023; 4 Jun (<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/debbie-sledge-talks-family-070000330.html>).