



## Editorial

# Open Access to research findings and Community Dental Health

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For the public good across an increasing fraction of the world, many of the larger bodies funding research demand public access to the published peer-reviewed findings arising from that research. Progress is being made in meeting those demands in recognition of the likely benefits and, undoubtedly, as *he who pays the piper calls the tune*, this might affect existing arrangements for disseminating research findings through independent academic journals, such as Community Dental Health

More than a decade ago a diverse coalition called the Open Access Movement applied pressure to have research findings made freely available to all with internet access. They asserted that unrestricted, free access to scholarly research would advance sciences, medicine and health. Their efforts culminated in the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) of 2002. Much has been achieved since then and their original recommendations have been revised and are now termed BOAI 10.

## Recommendations

The BOAI 10 policy recommendations include:

- Staff in higher education institutions (HEIs) should deposit their peer-reviewed papers in their institution's designated repository
- Those deposits should be made as early as possible, ideally at the time of acceptance, and no later than the date of formal publication
- Depositing other research outputs such as datasets, conference presentations, books or book chapters and work published before the policy's adoption is encouraged even when not required
- Publication in Open Access journals is preferred
- In the case of publications in a journal which is not Open Access then an inaccessible (dark or non-Open Access) copy of the paper could be deposited until such time as Open Access can be agreed.

Of course readers of Open Access material who use the information in their work must credit it to the original authors as is already commonplace. The Creative Commons Attribution license (cc-by) allows re-distribution and re-use of any licensed work, even for commercial purposes, on the condition that the originator is appropriately credited.

## Advantages for authors

There are sound reasons for authors to adopt Open Access: increasingly funders require it, it is for the common good and it is likely to increase readership and perhaps citation. A further advantage is associated with the next Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE's) Research Excellence Framework (REF). This is a system for assessing the quality of research introduced for the 2014 Research Assessment Exercise and requires that certain future research outputs submitted as evidence be made as widely accessible as possible by being uploaded to an institutional or subject repository within three months of acceptance for publication with the full text being available open access in accordance with any embargo periods set by the publisher.

## Effect on journals

Traditional academic journals are almost entirely financed by subscriptions and purchases of individual papers. If these research outputs, typically academic journal papers, are freely available then there may be pressure in these economically challenging times for a journal's subscribers to obtain papers through Open Access routes rather than by subscription. Of course subscribers may remain loyal because they value the editors' selection of papers likely to interest their readerships.

Widespread shifts away from subscription inevitably threaten the financial stability of academic journals. To offset the probable loss of income from subscriptions and single purchases journals typically charge an Article Processing Charge, or APC, for allowing accepted or published papers to be made Open Access on the journal website. APCs vary from around £800 up to £4000 for some 'prestigious' journals. There is a database of journals' policies in this respect available via SHERPA/Romeo.

Open Access journals are those with Open Access to all their content. Some of these are entirely web-based and have evolved recently to meet the demand for Open Access publication and have lower publication fees. Where individual papers in a journal are designated Open Access the journal is referred to as a hybrid. A number of journals do not yet support Open Access and a small minority have no intention of doing so.

### *Financing Open Access*

The fees payable to a journal for allowing Open Access might be incorporated into bids for grants from some funding bodies while other funders provide central funds to pay or recoup the APCs. For example, the Charities Open Access Fund (COAF) is a partnership between Arthritis Research UK, Breast Cancer Campaign, the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research and the Wellcome Trust which together provide central grants to 36 UK research institutions to meet Open Access article processing charges for research outputs funded by these charities. Most research intensive UK HEIs also receive a block grant from the Research Councils UK (RCUK) to pay APCs for work funded by any of the research councils e.g. MRC. The published output must include an acknowledgement of the applicable grant/funder. Additionally, some UK institutes are now providing central funds to pay for open access for authors who can not get funding for APCs via some other route. Often, although not always, papers have to pass some sort of quality test to qualify for these funds.

Some journals, e.g. the Public Library of Science or PLOS journals which are wholly open access journals, will consider reducing the fees in special cases, for example where research is not funded and there is no institutional support for paying APCs.

### *UK deadlines*

Pressure on UK authors to adopt Open Access policies is increasing. All publications arising from research funded by the Research Councils UK (encompassing Arts and Humanities Research Council, AHRC; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, BBSRC; Economic and Social Research Council, ESRC; Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, EPSRC, Medical Research Council, MRC; Natural Environment Research Council, NERC; and Science and Technology Facilities Council, STFC) have been required to be Open Access since April 2013 (RCUK, 2012). From April 2016 authors' peer-reviewed journal and conference papers must be lodged in an institutional or subject repository within three months of acceptance if they are to be eligible for the HEFCE's next REF.

### *Forms of Open Access*

There are various forms of Open Access which vary according to where the files are deposited and when they are made publically available. Some arrangements require an embargo on public release of a paper for a certain period after its publication in print and/or online. Two main classes of these arrangements are termed Green and Gold. The Green model has the author depositing a publisher-approved version of the output in a subject or institutional repository normally with an embargo period of perhaps three or six months from the publication date. The usually more costly Gold model has the paper freely available from the journal's website. In the latter the journal may be a completely Open Access journal with publication fees payable by authors. Alternatively, a traditional journal may allow authors to pay for individual papers to be designated Open Access and therefore downloadable without charge. These are termed hybrid

journals. The SHERPA/Romeo database further subdivides the above Green model publishers depending on which version (pre- or post-print) they allow to be made available open access via a repository. Some journals may insist on draft versions of papers in repositories being replaced with the final version on publication.

### *Open Access and Community Dental Health*

As Community Dental Health (CDH) does not charge submission or publication fees (except in the case of exceptionally long papers) it needs to charge an Open Access fee to offset potential subscription and purchase losses. That fee, currently £500, will be reviewed periodically to maintain the financial stability of the journal. Our Open Access papers are marked with a blue star icon on the journal's website ([www.cdhjournal.org](http://www.cdhjournal.org)) and in the printed journal by the open padlock logo seen by this paper's title. CDH is a hybrid journal with full Gold Open Access including all the Green options for self-archiving in any repository. CDH does not require any embargo period but asks that pre-print typescripts are replaced with final proof-corrected versions once they are available.

### *Adoption worldwide*

A new goal of the BOAI 10 recommendations is to achieve Open Access as the default method for distributing new peer-reviewed research in every field and in every country within ten years. They are making progress with Open Access already being adopted in the US and the UK and many international funders advocating green open access even if they will not provide funding for gold. The days of university and other libraries sending unwanted copies of journal holdings to third-world institutions are over. Anyone anywhere – be they in institutions or not – should soon have access to the latest research outputs (albeit not immediate access since embargo periods of up to a year are commonplace among publishers). Open Access once widespread should increase and accelerate the dissemination of research and so advance scientific progress and the associated economic growth. It should increase transparency and may improve public understanding of and confidence in scientific endeavour. It is also changing the world of academic publishing.

## **References**

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