

A watershed moment for the *BJD*: *Authors retain their article copyright*

‘I don’t own one word of this. Even though I spent hours writing it and was not paid. If you don’t believe me, look at the copyright statement at the bottom of this page.’¹ So wrote Professor Andrew Finlay in a *BJD* Editorial on copyright in 2015. At the time he was entirely right that, except for articles published as open access, authors publishing their work in most medical journals assigned copyright to the journal’s owner. While in most cases there are few practical consequences, this copyright transfer can make a big difference, an example being papers which describe a novel outcome measure instrument subsequently used in multiple commercial clinical trials where a fee for use is charged. Is every medical publisher the same on this issue? All will be revealed later...!

From 1st January 2023, following a competitive bid process, The British Association of Dermatologists changed its publisher for *BJD* and our companion journal, *Clinical and Experimental Dermatology*, from Wiley to Oxford University Press (OUP). Watershed moments like this provide an opportunity to reflect on progress and look ahead to future journal enhancements. The COVID pandemic has certainly allowed dermatology publishing to have greater impact on medicine and society as a whole than it had previously. The *BJD* was fortunate to publish several high-quality COVID submissions, including papers covering classification of rashes from COVID infection,² efforts to visualize SARS-CoV-2 proteins in the endothelial cells of acral chilblains,³ and skin reaction patterns from COVID vaccination.⁴ The COVID Symptom Study app paper in the *BJD* demonstrated that skin involvement occurred before any other symptom in one-fifth of patients and in SARS-CoV-2-positive cases a rash was the only manifestation of COVID in, again, a fifth of patients.⁵ Our seven COVID original articles generated an average of 78 citations each during the following year and the COVID rash classification paper was picked up by over 100 news outlets. Since then, we published the definitive paper detailing the clinical presentation of the recent monkeypox outbreak.⁶

A further enhancement is the creation of a Global Health and Equity section, which has been a game-changer in terms of attracting high-quality submissions from this growing research field, allowing the *BJD* to contribute to wider societal change. This section’s associate editor team is drawn from across the globe with specific expertise in areas such as structural racism and migrant health. Switching our editorial team meeting to a virtual

video conference format allowed more of our global editorial team to attend and reduced the *BJD*'s carbon footprint, as a silver lining from COVID-instigated changes.

Our Multimedia section now includes both our rapidly growing social media channels and also *BJD* Talks, the *BJD*'s monthly podcast. With OUP's help, we will continue to expand the *BJD*'s digital presence, with our new website able to showcase the added content that accompanies our original articles such as the expert commentary, plain language summary (PLS), author video and journal club-ready slides. Downloads of our PLS have exceeded 100 000 in total, of which one-third are downloads of the Mandarin translation. To enhance dissemination of our author videos they will be embedded in our new *BJD* website and will be shorter in duration, to facilitate viewing via the hugely popular *BJD* Instagram account, which now has more than 13 000 followers. The *BJD* now encourages authors to provide a graphical abstract at submission and we will help in the production process. Again, graphical abstracts are ideal for social media dissemination and are particularly well suited to the visual subject of dermatology.

The *BJD* will remain a hybrid journal and Wiley's Transformational Agreements will be replaced by OUP's equivalent Read and Publish deals, allowing many authors with academic affiliations to publish open access without incurring open access fees themselves. ScholarOne will continue to be our manuscript submission and reviewer platform, although improvements to enhance the author and reviewer experience will be undertaken. The *BJD*'s mission statement 'to publish the highest-quality dermatology research to improve patient care'⁷ continues to drive what we do as a journal, including an increasing influence from patients themselves in our editorial team and via the articles we publish.⁸

Returning to the copyright issue highlighted at the start of my editorial, I am delighted to confirm that under the terms of our new publishing agreement with OUP, authors of all *BJD* papers, whether published as open access or not, will retain copyright of their article. Rather than handing over copyright, authors are asked to provide to the *BJD* an 'Exclusive licence to publish' instead. If you don't believe me, look at the copyright statement at the bottom of this page!

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John R. Ingram

Division of Infection & Immunity, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

Correspondence

Email: IngramJR@cardiff.ac.uk

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5257-1142>

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receives income from the copyright of the Dermatology Life Quality Instrument (DLQI) and related instruments.

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