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BJD: onwards and upwards



Medical publishing does not stand still and, to paraphrase the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus, “The only thing that is constant is change.” This is my first issue as BJD Editor, having taken on leadership of the journal from Alex Anstey on July 1st. I am delighted that Eleni Linos, Stanford University, California, and Neil Rajan, Newcastle University, UK have joined the BJD senior editorial team as Deputy Editors.

While Editor of BJD from 2013 to 2019, Alex Anstey undertook a prodigious change process to ensure that BJD remains a top dermatology journal. Importantly, Alex started from first principles, asking the question ‘What does the BJD stand for?’¹ A consensus position statement emerged, in which BJD strives to publish the highest quality research encompassing clinical trials, epidemiology, outcomes and qualitative research, and translational research that describes basic science of potential clinical relevance.

Journal enhancements have flowed from the mission statement. The next step was to assemble a senior editorial team of stellar clinical academics for each journal section (take a look at the journal team on our website²). Our editorial team of section and associate editors increased in number from less than 20 to nearly 80 in a five year period (figure 1), with close to 1:1 gender balance and a wide geographical spread across the continents.³

Once the team was in place, we moved onto considering how to add value to original articles for our readers and authors. Under Alex’s leadership, most BJD original articles are accompanied by a plain language summary in English and Chinese, a commentary from an expert in the field, PowerPoint journal club slides and an author video (we now have a BJD YouTube channel⁴).

As well as these innovations, Alex ensured that the fundamentals of the BJD remain sound. He created a Journal Handbook, ensuring that all journal processes are formalised and aligned with best practice as defined by the Committee on Publication Ethics. Alex recommended creation of a BJD Editorial Board Advisory Committee (EBAC) to strengthen journal oversight and to manage

important areas such as appointment of our publisher and the BJD Editor. Prof John McGrath is current chair of EBAC, coordinating a set of world-leading dermatology clinical academics. The BJD is fortunate to receive their guidance.

What will I champion as incoming editor? My priorities are to broaden the global reach of the journal and to enhance the BJD's brand as a top dermatology journal, acting as a hub for the highest quality skin research to help improve patient care. Working from sound fundamentals, the process of journal evolution will continue. I will focus on the quality of original articles within BJD's core methodologies, with a particular emphasis on clinical trials that have the potential to change practice. The best clinical trial reports will benefit from a fast track review process to ensure publication in early view within a few days of submission. I myself will continue to be clinically- and research-active in the field of hidradenitis suppurativa, ensuring I retain empathy with authors and readers.

Academics are an important part of the BJD community and part of the drive to maintain and improve our dermatology journal ranking is to support the careers of academics who publish in BJD, who are judged by their publication outputs. While BJD strives for excellence in its original articles, it must remain accessible to dermatology trainees. The BJD is ensuring this by creation of Editorial Trainee posts, initially in the UK and now internationally.⁵ Included in their role is supervision of our Image Gallery, providing a publication avenue for less experienced authors.

Increasingly, clinical research needs active involvement from patient research partners. Patients are also direct beneficiaries of dermatology research, when making informed choices about their own care. In the context that the BJD mission statement is "To publish the highest quality dermatology research to improve patient care" patients will become more directly involved in the journal.⁶

There are many stakeholders who are important to BJD. Our success is built on the support of you, our reader, and by colleagues submitting their best work to BJD. Quality assurance of the work we publish is provided by our selfless reviewers, supported now by a team of BJD statisticians. BJD is a clinical journal and so we will continue to assist clinicians by publishing high quality guidelines, including those produced by British Association of Dermatology and, increasingly, guidelines from around the world that meet BJD quality criteria.⁷

Returning to the theme of change, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." Under my editorship, the mantra regarding our original articles will remain: quality, quality, quality.

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Conflicts of interest

Nil relevant

Figure 1



Legend: BJD Editorial Team meeting, July 2018