

As the journal is celebrating its 30th Anniversary, it seems appropriate to ask the question what the future holds. The journal has undergone an enormous transformation over the last five years, part of which is due to an adjustment to the various challenges thrown its way by the ongoing changes in publishing and research.

At this juncture of the journal's anniversary, the editorial board decided to review its strategy to make the journal fit for the next decade. To support this strategic review, we launched a survey of our authors and reviewers to obtain their views on what the journal stands for and where it should be in the foreseeable future.

We have had a phenomenal response to our survey, which gave us plenty of evidence to mull over and which will inform our decisions of the strategic direction of the journal as well as help us address some of the significant operational challenges coming our way.

But let us start with the present. The journal has grown considerably over the last five years. For a start, it has become much more international. Our editorial board now reflects this broader geographical scope. More visibility brings more submissions. We have not just doubled the number of submissions but also increased our output from 28 to now around 40 papers per year. That is a growth of 30% in only a few years. Yet, that does not entirely capture the real increase in our output. The reason is that the nature of the papers we receive has also fundamentally changed. Five years ago, there were only a few "open access" papers, i.e. papers which are being paid for by the author teams to be fully accessible to everyone, not just our subscribers. Today, at least 20% of our papers fall into this category. This shift to open access publishing is substantial and, whilst welcome, poses significant challenges to a subscription journal like ours.

Whilst this increase in submissions is very welcome indeed and reflective of the success of the journal, there are significant challenges for the journal in the times ahead. First, the publishing world is changing rapidly, and the journal needs to change with it. Gone are the times where hard copies of the journal are provided in libraries for students and practitioners to read. Electronic publishing mirrors new and emerging reading habits of our readership. Electronic copies are now the predominant medium for consuming our, and, in fact, most academic journals. This is something the pandemic has only accelerated.

As a transformation in reading and publishing takes place around us, the journal is also buffeted by changes in funding and research. The abovementioned open access papers are a reflection of fundamental shifts in how research is conducted, how its outputs are funded and how impact of research on practice is measured. Equity in access is now seen as critical to achieving impact. This has implications for what we publish, how we publish and who would like to publish with us. It will be harder to sustain the notion that our journal can achieve impact on practice without demonstrating equity of access to practitioners and researchers.

The responses to our survey clearly showed that the journal is confronting its challenges head on and coping extraordinarily well. Our authors told us that they value the way we work, were appreciative of the quick turnaround from submission to acceptance and rated highly the support our editorial team gave to them. Playing to our strengths will help us address the challenges of the future.

And those responding to our survey were also clear what these strengths are. They told us that the journal has a good focus, provides excellent support to authors and its special issues are thought to be topical and an excellent resource to practitioners and researchers alike. Particularly, the journal stands for fast turnaround, providing the essential link between research and practice and is appreciated because it looks beyond the narrow confines of



research questions. We are, in short, a key piece in the puzzle of the integrated care landscape. In the eyes of our readers and authors, we are articulating a holistic vision of integrated care where others are working in research silos. This is something we can be proud of.

Thanks to our authors and reviewers who answered the survey. We also know now more about what we can do to improve the journal's reach and impact. Our social media presence has been so far limited, and we need to give more space in the journal's pages to opinion pieces and debate. One suggestion frequently made was that we should record video summaries of the papers published in the journal. We already do video briefings with our guest editors (which you can read here <https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/jica/guest-editors-speak-about-their-work-special-issues-journal-integrated-care>), but this is certainly an idea which we are keen to explore.

We know that there is much more to be done to improve the journal, but the survey responses from our authors and reviewers have given us confidence that we are on the right path and on an exciting journey. The editorial board will define the journal's strategy for the next five years in the coming months, so watch out for new calls for special issues and invitations to write for the journal. Soon, you may even see us at a conference near you.

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