

Editorial: IUNS 2005

Tempus fugit – evolution and current impact of the *British Journal of Nutrition*

The *British Journal of Nutrition* marked the occasion of the last International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) meeting, held in Vienna in August 2001, with a special issue (vol. 86, no. 2) containing a range of articles across the spectrum of modern nutritional science. In an accompanying Editorial, I highlighted the many developments that had occurred in the Journal in the 4 years between Vienna and the preceding IUNS meeting in Montreal in 1997. These developments included the move to online publication alongside the paper version (now the norm for scientific journals), the provision to authors of a PDF file of their article (PDFs are now the main currency for reprints), the retention by authors of the copyright of their material – and of particular significance, the provision of free online access worldwide to our complete content 2 years after initial publication.

The *BJN* has been a leading international journal of nutritional science throughout the nearly 60 years of its existence, and I would like to take the opportunity of the Durban IUNS meeting to highlight the further developments in the Journal since Vienna. The most obvious change is undoubtedly the transition to an online manuscript submission and handling system – eJournal-Press (at <http://bjn.msubmit.net/>). This went live in May 2003 and as with other journals that have made a similar move it has proved highly successful, not least in our ability to provide authors with a more rapid decision on their manuscript. All reviewing, together with manuscript tracking by the Publications Office, is now done exclusively through the eJournalPress system.

Other visible changes include a more appealing cover design. A new section within the journal, *Horizons in Nutritional Science*, was introduced in January 2003 with the aim of providing short overviews of newly emerging areas, or areas of nutritional science where there have been major developments over the previous 2–3 years. This year the *Horizons* section has included articles on the link between vascular disease and postprandial changes in plasma cytokines following fatty meals (Burdge & Calder, 2005), on defining best practice for microarray analyses in nutrigenomic studies (Garosi *et al.* 2005), and on the biology of ghrelin, the stomach-derived hormone which stimulates food intake (Otto *et al.* 2005). In the present issue a *Horizons* article which considers the principles and application of proteomics in nutrition research is featured (Fuchs *et al.* 2005).

A development that has been very obvious to both the Publications Office and the Board over the past 3 years is the surge in the number of articles submitted to the *BJN*. After many years of receiving some 250–300 articles annually, submissions rose sharply in 2003 to 402 papers, and then to 539 in 2004, and at the time of writing we are on course for >600 articles in 2005 – a doubling since Vienna. No doubt there are a number of factors behind this remarkable growth, but it surely

indicates that we are doing the important things right. These include the more rapid response to authors and quicker publication of papers once accepted. With regard to the latter, pre-publication of accepted papers is soon to be introduced and initially this will be a printer's proof, but we will move as soon as possible to posting the PDF of manuscripts within days of their acceptance. One of the consequences of the increased number of submissions is that our page budget, although increasing, is under considerable pressure and unfortunately we are not able to accept all the papers that we might wish.

The accessibility of the Journal, already high, has risen further through a change in our access policy such that the *BJN* is now freely available online 1 year after publication (instead of the 2-year period initially). Visibility and accessibility of the material published is central to the mission of scientific journals and a key further development is that the whole of the archive of the *BJN*, going back to vol. 1 in 1948, has been digitised. This will be freely available on the web (<http://www.ingentaconnect.com>) and will provide a major resource for researchers, teachers and students of nutrition, as well as historians of science. Provision of the archive represents a considerable financial commitment on the part of the UK Nutrition Society and I am delighted that the Publications Committee, especially the former Treasurer, Professor Sean Strain, and the Publications Officer, Dr Kate Younger, have been so supportive of this venture. The digitisation project has also encompassed the archive of the other Nutrition Society journals, including the long-established *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*.

There is a growing emphasis on the part of authors, as well as by journals themselves, on the issue of citations and impact factors, as I have noted in previous Editorials (Trayhurn, 2002, 2003). Impact factors are increasingly central to the reputation of journals and are widely used by authors in making decisions on where to submit their best work. However, the current focus on impact factors has been widely criticised since such indices are in practise inappropriate for the evaluation either of research or of researchers (Seglen, 1997). One of several problems is that the definition of the impact factor means that it is biased towards those fields where studies can be conducted within a short period – which is generally not the case in nutrition where long-term studies are frequently required. Nevertheless, the impact factor of the *BJN* has been rising in recent years and the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) data for 2004 indicates that it now stands at 2.71. In addition, there has been a continuing rise in the total number of citations to *BJN* articles each year, and for 2004 this stood at 7204 cites.

In many ways, the most important indicator of 'impact' is the extent to which particular articles, and the work of individual

scientists, are cited over the mid to long term. The most highly cited article in the *BJN* was published in 1967, and it describes the use of skinfold thickness to assess the amount of body fat in humans (Durnin & Rahaman, 1967). This paper has now received a remarkable 1085 citations, as of June 2005; it was reproduced in our occasional series of *Citation Classics* in January 2003, at which time it had received 720 citations (the large increase over the past 3 years is likely to be due primarily to changes in the reach of the ISI database, although the paper continues to receive a number of citations each year).

I have written previously on the extent to which the *BJN* currently publishes papers that quickly become highly cited (Trayhurn, 2003, 2004), and I would like to illustrate this with an update of the picture for the period since the beginning of this decade. Table 1 shows that a number of papers in 2000–2002 have each been cited more than thirty times, with two in 2000 being cited more than fifty times (for context, the average scientific paper is cited no more than once). Two articles published just over 2 years ago, in 2003, have also each received more than thirty citations, while two articles last year have already been cited over twenty times (Trayhurn & Wood, 2004; Whanger, 2004). Table 1 also shows the high citation of articles in our supplements, with six papers since 2000 each receiving in excess of forty citations. *BJN* supplements contain papers presented at specific symposia run and funded by an organisation outwith the Nutrition Society, and the high number of citations illustrates the value of this type of publication.

Finally, on a personal note, this is the last Editorial that I write as Editor-in-Chief of the *BJN*, my tenure ending this year. It has been a privilege to serve the international nutritional sciences community as Editor-in-Chief of such an important journal, and

I would like to take the opportunity to thank in particular the Deputy Editors, the members of the Editorial Board, and the staff of the Publications Office in London for their considerable help and support. I am delighted to welcome my successor, Professor Philip Calder of the University of Southampton (UK), and to wish him well; Philip Calder will take over from me in December of this year.

Tempus fugit!

Paul Trayhurn

Editor-in-Chief

School of Clinical Sciences

University of Liverpool

Liverpool

UK

(p.trayhurn@liverpool.ac.uk)

Table 1. Most highly cited articles published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* since 2000*

Authors	No. of citations
2000	
Gill <i>et al.</i> (2000)	59
Kritchevsky (2000)	59
Jebb <i>et al.</i> (2000)	44
Liggins <i>et al.</i> (2000)	40
Chango <i>et al.</i> (2000)	35
2001	
Combs (2001)	50
Hill & Davies (2001)	48
Dulloo & Samec (2001)	46
Scollan <i>et al.</i> (2001)	47
Dudeja <i>et al.</i> (2001)	39
2002	
Burdge & Wootton (2002)	41
Noone <i>et al.</i> (2002)	40
Burdge <i>et al.</i> (2002)	38
Young <i>et al.</i> (2002)	29
2003	
Zittermann (2003)	47
Wood & Trayhurn (2003)	34
Supplements	
Frayn (2000)	68
Seidell (2000)	64
Astrup <i>et al.</i> (2000)	62
Vessby (2000)	51
Calder <i>et al.</i> (2002)	50

* The five most highly cited papers published each year since 2000, or published in supplements, are shown for those articles which have received more than twenty-five citations (as of 30 July 2005).

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