EDITORIALS

Changes are afoot

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The *British Journal of Anaesthesia* (BJA) is one of the oldest journals of anaesthesia in the world, having started publication in 1923 and appearing regularly since then. Considerable changes to its publication frequency and its physical appearance have been made over the years, not least of which has been the recent move to full-colour printing and the changing images on the front cover that have been introduced under the guidance of the Editor in Chief, Ravi Mahajan. In addition, a companion publication was introduced some 10 years ago, *Continuing Education in Anaesthesia, Critical Care & Pain* (CEACCP), initially with David Rowbotham and now Jeremy Langton as the Editor in Chief. In this editorial, I am presenting my personal view, and the ongoing discussions within the Board, of how BJA should progress over the coming few years.

The BJA has always tried to be at the cutting edge of the publishing world. More senior readers will well remember the introduction of *BJA Concise*. This was our first foray into online or electronic publishing. Fellows and members of the College no longer received a paper copy of the complete journal but instead had a much shorter paper copy of abstracts of all the published papers along with one or two review articles reproduced in full. The complete, normal copy of the journal was available electronically. After criticism because of the resulting loss of full paper copy, this first foray was abandoned.

To an extent, BJA has two slightly different audiences, each with their own specific requirements. The practising clinical anaesthetist may be more interested in receiving contemporary information to support continuing professional development, which may also have a more news and political bias. The academic anaesthetist may be more interested in ensuring that they publish in the best possible journal, which may have more to do with impact factor and external recognition. I realize that I have made a somewhat arbitrary division and there will inevitably be considerable overlap. As a result of the advances in the Internet, it is now possible to encompass both requirements, and essentially, this is the argument of paper vs electronic copy. Each group could have a journal tailored to their own requirements.

The time has now come to have a second look at our publishing model. In my opinion, this is being driven by a number of factors, and this move will also present a variety of opportunities for enhanced content for those who read the journal. Another reason for change follows on from my personal enquiry of readers over the last few months, where the vast majority have spontaneously stated that they would rather receive the BJA electronically. The costs of paper and printing, transport and postage are some of the reasons, along with the use of trees and an effort to minimize our carbon footprint. Many readers will already have experience of what extra can be provided by accessing the information electronically, because many newspapers and also medical and scientific journals have an online presence. For example, we could add supplementary material, such as echocardiographic and ultrasound videos and documentary material detailing specific methodology. Electronic access will also mean easily searchable and linkable articles and topics and will allow the reader to interrogate the cited references.

In fact, many will not realize that over the past few years the electronic version of the BJA is the official format or copy used for all indexing; therefore, it is this copy that is the version of record and not the paper copy sent through the post. Also, many would have noticed that for the last few years the BJA has been producing supplements, collections of educational review articles and also special themed issues, all available only electronically. For example, on accessing the BJA home page several special issues can be opened, including the most recent one, *Anaesthesia and Cancer*. We also have a regular collaboration with the New York Societies Postgraduate
meeting held each year in December, where we produce a collection of reviews from selected speakers, entitled BJA/PGA.

Our publishers, OUP, are currently moving all of their journals to a new Highwire platform, which will present the journal content in a more attractive fashion. Coupled with this, we are setting up an increased online presence for supplements and will also create online bundles of articles around specific topics, called ‘microsites’. BJA will move onto this new platform in early 2015.

These changes will have ramifications for both BJA and CEACCP, and it is most likely to be with CEACCP that we will first see the changes. The Board recognize that this journal is greatly appreciated, and we wish to rebrand and expand its remit. In recognition of the close links with the BJA, we have proposed that CEACCP changes its name to BJA Education to provide a better indication of the role we would like it to have. The Editorial Board agreed to this change at its last meeting. Over the coming months, it will start to have expanded content (podcasts, journal club, blogs and the ability to explore new ideas easily), all available only to online readers. This will clearly take time to establish, and we would actively encourage the submission of articles and other material that help us to fulfil this expanded role. Hopefully, readers will also start to appreciate the benefits of online access to BJA itself.

The Board and I would not wish to force this change on its readers, but we hope that the advantages of electronic access will become so apparent that readers will increasingly demand the switch from paper to online access. Both BJA and CEACCP can already be accessed online. Please try going to the BJA home page (BJA.oxfordjournals.org/) and sample what is available. To access journal content easily, it is convenient to have an email sent to you when each new issue becomes available; this is called the eTOC alerting system. Within the email are the tables of contents (TOC) along with hyperlinks to open individual articles directly, again both for BJA and CEACCP. To access this service, go to the BJA homepage and on the right-hand side can be found an alerting service button. Click either BJA or CEACCP or both for email alerts for the table of contents and also access to advance publication. You may also need to access the ‘My accounts’ page and sign in with your credentials or if you have forgotten them then click the relevant hyperlink. You can find your subscriber number on the mailing sheet enclosed with your copy of the journal.

I would hope that these changes will be welcomed by most readers once they have had chance to sample the extra material which will be available. But it is important for us to maintain a dialogue with our readers, and we welcome feedback to ensure we are on the right track; letters to the editor in electronic format would be welcome.

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Consensus statement from the BJA Workshop on Cancer and Anaesthesia


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