

Why do we need yet another journal?

The last few years have seen an almost epidemic increase in the number of journals in all fields, including substance use research and related fields. It is practically impossible to imagine any paper with a scientific form that would be unpublishable today; several studies have shown that even contentless agglomerations of words that appear scientific found a place to be published. True, in some cases people have to pay their way into journals, but publication is possible.

Why then would one want to add another journal?

First, the scenario described above is specific to high-income countries. While a publication fee of several thousand dollars is a small fraction of the average NIH grant, it may mean a lot for researchers from low- and mid-income countries. Second, the ease of publication we describe above depends on maintaining a specific scientific form and style that are related to the English language and standard research training. People from other backgrounds, and those who cannot pay for English copy editing, are at a disadvantage. Third, while it may be possible to publish almost any paper, certain papers are not really encouraged, and into this category fall cross-cultural or cross-national comparisons.

The *International Journal of Alcohol and Drug Research* (IJADR) tries to fill this gap. First, it will publish without any price tag attached, allowing both the authors to publish and the readers to access the paper for free. Second, it will establish a system in which interesting papers will not face an insurmountable barrier of costly English copy editing, by establishing a mentoring system and by offering free copy editing as part of the publication package. Third, it will establish a platform where people may be inclined to browse through the journal and stop and read other interesting papers if they are looking for international comparative results.

Obviously, the third aim is the most difficult in today's world, where most people use search engines to collect papers with relatively concentrated foci from different journals. When was the

last time you went to the library and simply browsed a journal for interesting material? Most people would have to go way back for such an event.

How can we be sure that IJADR will succeed? We can't, of course, but the more interesting and relevant the articles, the higher the chance of success. This means that in the medium term, the journal will have to be selective and turn down some articles to keep readers returning. It also means that the editors must work hard to find hidden gems, even if they are not formally impeccable, and bring them into the limelight, sometimes at the expense of the tenth standard comparison of binge rates between some European countries we already know a lot about. In the short term, interesting articles can be arranged by inviting people and twisting arms. In the medium term, IJADR will have to be successful by attracting these quality articles based on its own reputation.

Why does the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) have an interest in supporting IJADR? The philosophy of a forum for comparative research fits well with CAMH. For example, while everyone pays lip service to gene-environment interactions and to how the environment could shape the genetic basis, there are few examples of such research. It would be fascinating to widen such research into low- and mid-income conditions and their environmental impact. We know from a number of comparative studies that addictions are defined and labeled differently in different cultures, even if all countries officially rely on ICD. This is just an example, but it shows some of the possibilities.

No journal is better than the content the authors bring in. Let us hope that IJADR will thrive in this way, and that in five years we can look at an established specialized journal of comparative research with a decent impact—and dedicated readers who still once in a while simply go to the journal website and browse through the most recent articles, or who look forward to receiving IJADR's latest table of contents.

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