

Brave New World

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Scientific publishing began in 1665 with the inauguration of the *Journal des sçavans* in France and the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in England.¹ These enterprises established the pattern that has endured to the present: that of a learned publication, financed privately, which shared knowledge within a select circle. By recording a date of publication, claims of scientific priority could be validated, and as the peer-review process became established, quality was ensured. The principles of peer review in medical practice can be traced back at least as far as the Syrian physician Ishap bin Ali Al Rahwi who died in 931.² Peer-reviewed publication as we now understand it is conventionally regarded as having begun when the Royal Society assumed editorial control of the *Philosophical Transactions* in 1752, although its roots can be traced back to at least a century before.³ The process has evolved in parallel with technology, as the typewriter, carbon paper, and other copying technologies allowed easier dissemination of manuscripts to external reviewers.⁴ The *Journal des sçavans* lasted into the 19th century; the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* is still published, and in 2011 all articles published more than 70 years ago (69 000 at the time) were made available online to the public.⁵

The rise of the World Wide Web as a freely accessible source of knowledge has transformed scientific publishing since 2000, leading to a new open-access model of publishing in which the sponsors and/or authors of scientific manuscripts bear the cost of publication, permitting free public access to their works. Some traditional journals have adopted hybrid models in which articles become available to the public after a specified period of time, or in which some articles of broad interest are made freely available immediately. These moves in publishing practice have occurred in response to pressure from both governmental bodies^{6,7} and the public. Open access is workable in the developed world and has clear benefits to readers in the less developed countries, who may lack the wherewithal to access traditional journals. On the other side of the equation, scientists in these areas often lack the funds to support publication costs; models have been developed to help them overcome this barrier.⁸

Open-access publication has not been free of criticism, and a recent study (fairly characterized as a sting operation) found

that peer review was uneven across a large group of open-access journals.⁹ The fact that open access is associated with publication charges is regarded by some editors and authors as an inherent source of bias that cannot be overcome, recognizing also that there are many ethical perils involved in the traditional subscription-based model, particularly when advertising is part of the revenue stream.¹⁰ These concerns aside, an online survey of over 2000 authors publishing in open-access journals found that most respondents were pleased with their experience and planned to continue publishing in this medium.¹¹

In this complex and rapidly evolving environment, *Child Neurology Open*, a fee-charging, open-access sister to the *Journal of Child Neurology*, enters the world of medical publishing. We are mindful of the issues discussed earlier and pledge to maintain the standards attained in the *Journal of Child Neurology*. Both journals share the same editorial staff and boards, and both require peer review and disclosures of potential conflicts of interest. *Child Neurology Open* aims to provide a platform for the rapid publication of scientifically sound and ethically transparent manuscripts that add to the store of knowledge in the discipline of child neurology. Case reports and brief communications, which have intrinsic scholarly and educational value,¹² will be welcomed, as will more traditional scientific studies and reviews. We believe that *Child Neurology Open* will meet a growing need in the child neurology community and look forward to your participation and constructive feedback.

The first editor of *Philosophical Transactions* puts it much more eloquently:

This is my Solicitude, That, as I ought not to be unfaithful to those Counsels you have committed to my Trust, so also that

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I may not altogether waste any minutes of the leasure [sic] you afford me. And thus have I made the best use of some of them, that I could devise; To spread abroad Encouragements, Inquiries, Directions, and Patterns that may animate, and draw upon Universal Assistances.

The Great God prosper you in the Noble Engagement of Dispersing the Lustre of his Glorious Works, and the Happy Inventions of obliging Men all over the World, to the General Benefit of Mankind: So wishes with real Affections,

Your humble and obedient servant,

Henry Oldenburg¹³

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared the following potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this Editorial: I receive honoraria as Editor-In-Chief of the *Journal of Child Neurology* and *Child Neurology Open*; royalties as Section Editor (Pediatric Neurology) for Up-To-Date; travel funds and meeting registration costs as an Editor of the Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease. Research: I have received research funding from Actelion Pharmaceuticals, the National Institutes of Health (U54NS065768), Mayo Foundation, National Niemann-Pick Disease Foundation, Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Consulting: I have received honoraria from Actelion Pharmaceuticals (Advisory Board), Agios (General consulting), Amicus Therapeutics (Advisory Board), Orphazyme (General consulting), Shire HGT (Advisory Board) and Stem Cells, Inc (Advisory Board).

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