

Current Developments in Nutrition: A New Journal Designed for the Open-Access Era^{1,2}

Jack Odle*

Department of Animal Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Dear members and friends of ASN:

I am delighted to introduce you to *Current Developments in Nutrition (CDN)*³, the most recent addition to the ASN family of journals serving the worldwide nutrition community. I am Jack Odle, Professor of Nutritional Biochemistry in the Department of Animal Science at North Carolina State University, and I have the exciting task of serving as the inaugural Editor-in-Chief.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

It is an understatement to say that the world of scholarly publication is in a turbulent state. The e-mail inbox of most scientists is bombarded with calls for papers from recently created open-access journals. They abound, and this outcome contrasts with the prediction made in 1995 by LaPorte et al. (1) in their article entitled “The Death of Biomedical Journals.” The authors forecasted that the utility of the internet would allow authors to directly distribute their own research, without the need for journals per se (now called “green” open access). This prediction did not foresee the strong rise in popularity of citation frequency, impact factors, and eigenfactors—metrics that codify the valued credibility component provided by reputable journals. Of course these metrics are of central importance to many authors as they choose where to publish their work. Accordingly, credible journals have not only survived, but they have thrived as the volume of scientific publications has grown.

The turbulence causes me to reflect back to the mid-1990s, when I chaired the Publications Management Committee for the ASN. The ASN leadership made the bold decision to begin publishing electronically, and *The Journal of Nutrition (JN)* was the first nutrition journal to do so. The decision was made with trepidation, not knowing the ramification it might have on subscriptions that provided core funding. *JN* not only survived, but led and flourished, and others quickly followed.

Further disruption came in 2009 when the NIH Public Access Policy was implemented, requiring NIH-funded researchers to submit their publications to the National Library of Medicine. As this mandate rippled through the scientific publishing community, a compromise was established wherein journals could retain subscription-only access for a 12-mo period before transferring manuscripts into PubMed Central. This allowed subscription-based journals such as *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (AJCN)* and *JN* to remain financially viable.

It is now a rational and progressive step forward for *CDN* to remove the 12-mo subscription barrier and, as an open-access journal, to make published papers immediately available to the scientific community and to the public at large. This accelerated worldwide distribution and access ranks among the greatest attributes of open-access publication for both authors and readers (2). Under this publication model [called direct “gold” open access (3)], journal subscriptions are replaced with article-processing charges (4) paid by authors or often by a host institution or other funding body.



Published under the terms of the CC BY-NC license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)
Curr Dev Nutr 2017;1:e000001; doi:10.3945/cdn.116.000001.

¹ The author reports no funding received for this article.

² Author disclosures: J Odle, no conflicts of interest.

*To whom correspondence should be addressed.
 E-mail: jodle@nutrition.org.

³ Abbreviations used: *AJCN*, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*; *CDN*, *Current Developments in Nutrition*; *JN*, *The Journal of Nutrition*.

THE OPPORTUNITY BEFORE US

Over the past 3 y, ASN has conducted extensive investigation into the need for and feasibility of creating an open-access journal. Efforts included author and member surveys and interviews with thought leaders within the society, including editorial staff of existing ASN journals, as well as financial projections scrutinized by the Publications Management Committee. Compelling data derived from the Web of Science (5) for publications in the nutrition and dietetics category document steady growth (7.1% per year) in the number of publications from 2009 to 2015 (Figure 1); however, none of this growth has been captured by our existing flagship journals (*AJCN* or *JN*), which publish a relatively stable number of papers per year. Additional data (not shown) indicate that, in 2015, <5% of ASN member publications were published in *AJCN* and *JN*, whereas a larger proportion were published in open-access journals. Collectively, these data strongly supported the decision by the ASN leadership to establish the gold open-access journal *CDN*.

MISSION, DISTINCTIVES, AND SCOPE

CDN is established as a peer-reviewed, open-access journal that strives to briskly review, publish, and disseminate high-quality research in nutritional sciences. *CDN* offers extra value to authors and readers by providing the following:

- A broad scope encompassing the breadth of nutrition research
- A simplified submission process
- A rapid review process (in most cases, limited to one revision)
- Alternative article-level metrics (with the use of Altmetrics)

- Means for authors to collaborate, share data, and share information about their published works on scholarly collaboration networks
- Accelerated worldwide dissemination, with articles published online within days of acceptance and made available immediately to the global research community
- Publishing innovation—*CDN* will provide a platform for publishing innovation, to attentively serve the needs of authors and readers, and advance the scholarship of nutritional sciences.

The broad journal scope includes both human and animal nutrition and ranges from deep, mechanistic studies at molecular/biochemical and cellular levels to whole-body metabolism, clinical health, fitness, and population health. This breadth directly supports ASN's mission to extend the knowledge of nutrition through basic, multidisciplinary, and clinical research to improve public health and clinical practice worldwide. Areas of new and added emphasis include the following: eating behavior and qualitative assessments; nutrition education; implementation science; nutrition and exercise physiology; nutritional impacts on cognitive function; intervention program methods and outcomes; evaluation and validation studies of dietary and nutrition methods; food and nutrition policy; human food and animal feed composition; agricultural and food-system methods affecting nutritional value; processing, packaging, and storage effects on nutritional value; and animal nutrition (agricultural and companion animals and aquaculture).

Authors of manuscripts that are declined by other ASN journals will have the option to submit their manuscripts, along with any reviews they may have received, to *CDN*. This transfer could reduce the need for additional reviews and expedite publication. Well-conducted confirmatory studies and well-designed studies reporting negative results can make important contributions to the body of scientific knowledge, and these will be considered for publication.

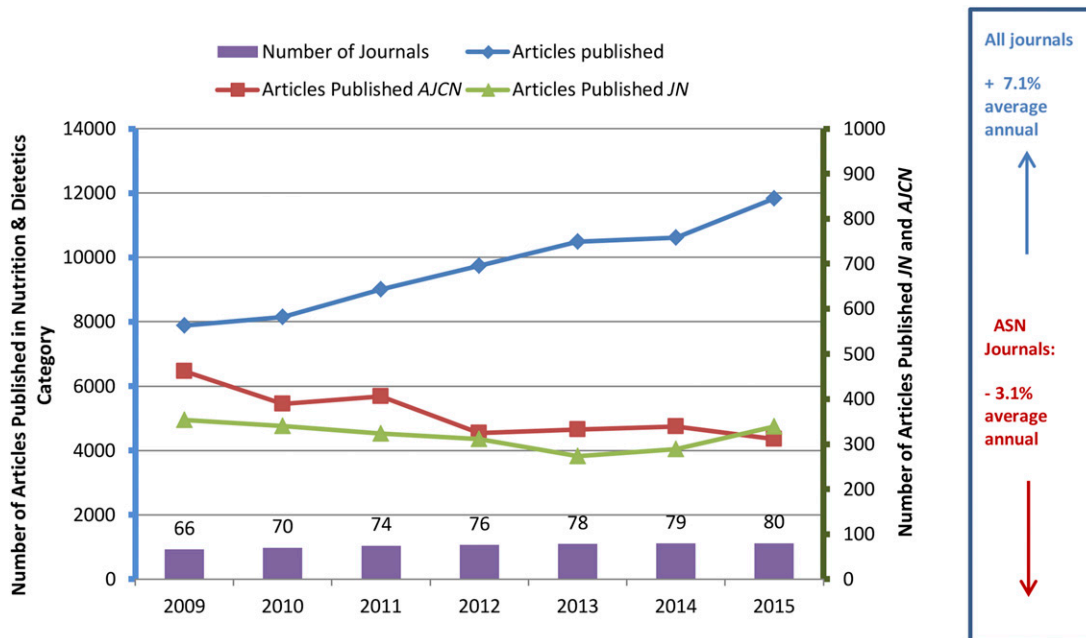


Figure 1 Articles published in the nutrition and dietetics category and in ASN journals. Data source: Web of Science (5). *AJCN*, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*; *JN*, *The Journal of Nutrition*.

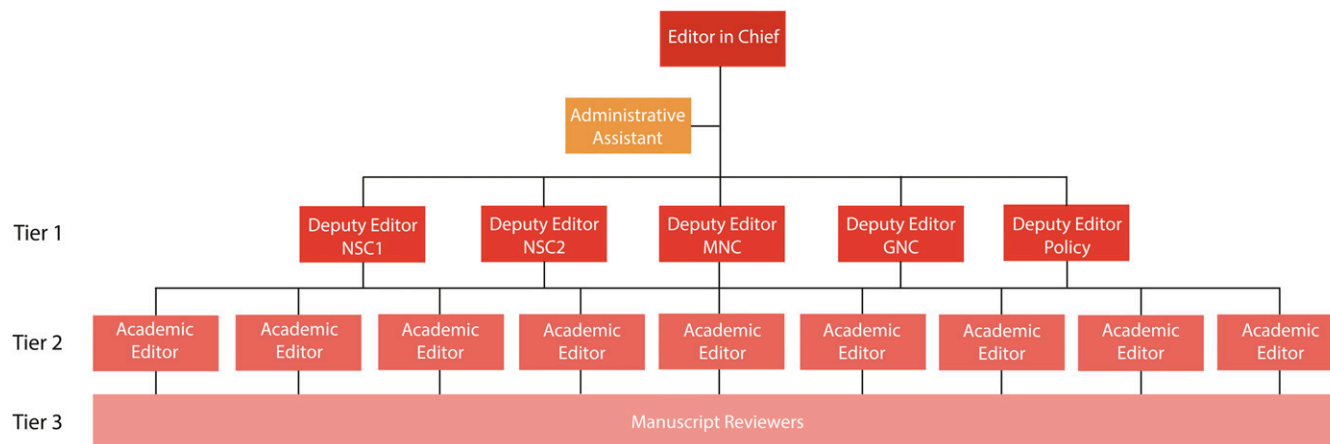


Figure 2 Current Developments in Nutrition scalable 3-tier editorial staffing plan. GNC, Global Nutrition Council; MNC, Medical Nutrition Council; NSC, Nutritional Science Council.

A NEW EDITORIAL STRUCTURE

The comprehensive scope with expanding new areas of content demands a parallel editorial structure to provide the breadth of expertise necessary to chaperone high-quality and rapid peer review. Accordingly, *CDN* is structured with a 3-tier arrangement of editors (Figure 2), including deputy editors (tier 1), academic editors (tier 2), and manuscript reviewers (tier 3). The architecture is scalable and dynamic in the sense that each tier can be expanded or redirected as the Journal develops.

I am excited to introduce the inaugural deputy editors, drawn from each scientific council within ASN: **Sarah Booth**, Tufts University, supporting the Nutritional Sciences Council; **Connie Bales**, Duke University, supporting the Medical Nutrition Council; and **Rafael Perez-Escamilla**, Yale University, supporting the Global Nutrition Council. In addition, **Eileen Kennedy**, Tufts University, will serve as deputy editor supporting Food and Nutrition Policy. They will assist me in providing collaborative leadership to the Journal and will share responsibility for editorial decisions on submitted manuscripts. Within the second tier, the academic editors will serve a role comparable to that of associate editors for the other ASN journals and will chaperone the review of most manuscripts. I am equally excited to introduce the founding academic editors as **Janet King**, Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute; **Gerald Combs**, Cornell University; **Joel Mason**, Tufts University; **Janos Zempleni**, University of Nebraska–Lincoln; **Dennis Villareal**, Baylor College of Medicine; **Pamela Pehrsson**, USDA–Beltsville, MD; **Jessica Fanzo**, Johns Hopkins University; **Kola Ajuwon**, Purdue University; and **Anna Maria Siega-Riz**, University of Virginia.

THE CHALLENGE WE FACE

The open-access era has produced an exponential increase in the number of journals. At the time of this writing, the Directory of Open Access Journals (6) catalogued 9199 open-access journals, and a search of the term “nutrition” in the directory yielded 108 journals. The plethora includes some low-quality journals with

negligible peer review, and a pay-to-publish criticism has stained the image of open-access publishing, which is unfortunate for the legitimate, high-quality open-access publishers. Within this ocean of journals, further controversy has emerged because it contains some so-called counterfeit “predatory” journals. Such profit-driven journals operate under covert and capricious policies (7) to the detriment of unsuspecting authors and legitimate, reputable journals. The controversy reached a recent climax when the Federal Trade Commission filed charges in August 2016 against a large open-access publisher.

How will *CDN* rise above this swell and controversy? In a single word, the answer rests in you. The members and friends of ASN include a worldwide community of >5000 professional nutritionists. The strength of this community and the quality of the ASN brand shines brightly from our leading flagship journals, *AJCN* and *JN*, as well as our award-winning review journal, *Advances in Nutrition*. The full backing of the ASN leadership for the launch of *CDN* is of key importance, but the foundation for success resides in the quality of publications that it attracts and the timely, high-quality peer review that it renders.

Speaking collectively for the distinguished editors and ASN editorial staff who have committed their time and talents to the launch of *CDN*, we call for your support. *CDN* needs your quality contributions as authors, readers, and reviewers. The success of this journal is anchored in you. This is your journal. I invite and encourage you to register your willingness to serve as a reviewer for *CDN*. Please visit <http://submit.cdn.nutrition.org> to provide your contact information and areas of expertise.

I am excited and eager to chaperone this nascent journal's progressive entry into the open-access arena, and I look forward to working with the nutrition community to ensure its success.

Respectfully yours,

Jack Odle

Editor-in-Chief

Current Developments in Nutrition

Acknowledgments

The sole author had responsibility for all parts of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

1. LaPorte RE, Marler E, Akazawa S, Sauer F, Gamboa C, Shenton C, Glosser C, Villasenor A, Maclure M. The death of biomedical journals. *BMJ* 1995;310:1387–90.
2. Tennant JP, Waldner F, Jacques DC, Masuzzo P, Collister LB, Hartgerink CH. The academic, economic and societal impacts of Open Access: an evidence-based review. *F1000Res* 2016;5:632.
3. Lindshield BL. Does the nutrition and food science community value openness? *J Hum Nutr Food Sci* 2013;1:1005.
4. Solomon D, Bjork BC. Article processing charges for open access publication—the situation for research intensive universities in the USA and Canada. *PeerJ* 2016;4:e2264.
5. Web of Science [Internet] [cited 2016 Oct 24]. Available from: http://ipsience.thomsonreuters.com/product/web-of-science/?_ga=1.49011238.1451742386.1483538937.
6. Directory of open access journals [Internet] [cited 2016 Sep 16]. Available from: <https://doaj.org/>.
7. Beall's list: potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers [Internet] [cited 2016 Sep 16]. Available from: <https://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>.