

Editorial

JAN 40 years on

In January 1976 Dr James P Smith OBE, the Founding Editor of JAN (1976–1999), opened his first editorial as follows:

The appearance of this new nursing journal is an exciting and fitting introduction to the last quarter of the twentieth century. It aims to become an international medium for the publication of scholarly nursing papers and a means of documenting the evergrowing body of nursing knowledge. (p. 1)

We are now well on the way toward the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century and three other editors – Professor Jane Robinson OBE (2000–2002); Professor Alison Tierney CBE (2003–2011) and me (2012–present) – have ‘held the reins’. I had the privilege of working under James Smith and Jane Robinson and of taking over from Alison Tierney and the 40th anniversary of JAN presents an opportunity to look back and, more importantly, to look forward.

Looking back

Therefore, has JAN become ‘an international medium for the publication of scholarly nursing papers and a means of documenting the ever-growing body of nursing knowledge’? In terms of size, JAN has grown from publishing fewer than 50 papers in its first year to publishing over 300 annually for the past few years. It seems there is more nursing knowledge to publish and that JAN is playing a major role in its dissemination. JAN was an international journal from the first issue which contained an article on nursing in Israel (Halevi & Ron 1976) among predominantly UK based articles. However, the international status of JAN has grown immensely and in 2014 we received manuscripts from 55 countries of which UK-based manuscripts form a minority and do not represent the largest group of submissions, which now come from the USA. According to the Thomson Reuters journal impact factor list, where JAN has held a consistently high impact factor (1.741 in 2014), JAN is the second largest academic nursing journal in terms of published papers and, by a long way, the highest cited (12,024 in 2014). In the UK 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, more JAN articles were submitted to the Nursing and Midwifery sub-panel than any other journal and JAN articles were also submitted to other cognate sub-panels such as Allied Health Professions, Social Work and Social care (<http://www.rae.ac.uk/results/>; accessed 9 June 2015). I think it is safe to say that JAN is well established, well recognized and highly influential.

Looking forward

As James Smith (1976, p. 1) said:

It is not our intention, however, to permit the Journal of Advanced Nursing to become an end in itself. It must be a means toward the ends of improving the effectiveness of the practice of nursing and midwifery, of enhancing the standards of nursing education and nursing service management, and of fostering research-mindedness in members of the nursing profession.

It is hard to evaluate the extent to which JAN has enhanced standards of nursing education and fostered research-mindedness in the nursing profession, and unsafe to extrapolate from our wide readership and high level of citations; but the mission remains the same. In addition, taking James Smith’s point into account, none of us at JAN intend the journal to become an end in itself and we are constantly working on ways to increase our impact and influence. JAN has been online for many years and we are making full use of the online environment. JAN articles may be published open access if the authors choose this route, with the editorial and pay to publish open access process being entirely separate. We also make some of our content free to download periodically – for a limited time – through the medium of special virtual issues which bring together related groups of articles under the auspices of a guest editor. We have embraced social media and currently have a flagship Twitter site with over 10,000 followers (@jadvnursing) and a blog with over 100 entries (JAN interactive) where we highlight selected articles, publish correspondence and invite authors to publicize their articles. Through the Twitter site and JAN interactive we also promote useful links to our podcasts, YouTube and other online material which is mainly designed to help potential authors prepare appropriate material. Our commitment to the use of social media is evident in the recent appointment of a dedicated Social Media editor.

As a team of editors we ensure that JAN is prominent in shaping and promoting good practice in academic publishing in nursing. Recently we have considered: authorship (Hayter et al. 2013); making manuscripts relevant to an international audience (Hayter & Watson 2014); open access (Pickler et al. 2015); and salami slicing and duplication (Watson et al. 2015). In my January editorial of 2014 (Watson 2015) I outlined what I thought were the issues on the publishing landscape, many of which we have already addressed as outlined above. In addition, our strategy is to ‘horizon scan’ the global issues in nursing and to ensure that we are providing coverage. Issues such as the changing demographics of the nursing workforce and the concomitant and complicated shortages of nurses will remain a major focus, and we have addressed these already (Abrahamsen 2015, Liebermann et al. 2015, Tourangeau et al. 2015). Related to the workforce issue is cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit in nursing – something that needs to be addressed urgently – and we already publish excellent papers in this area (Twigg et al. 2015a,b, Schreuders et al. 2015, Yang et al. 2015). Closely related is the value of nursing education –

degree and advanced – and we will continue to address this, as we have done in the past (Bagnasco et al. 2015, McCutcheon et al. 2015, O’Connell et al. 2014, Stacey et al. 2015). We are always looking for issues that may become more important in the short to medium term and climate change and environmental concern – perhaps seemingly peripheral to nursing – have been the focus of two recent articles (Anäker et al. 2015, Kangasniemi et al. 2014). Similarly, we have addressed another area of increasing importance: genomics (Andrews et al. 2014, Prows et al. 2014). We celebrate international health issues by ‘showcasing’ relevant articles and inviting world leaders to comment on JAN interactive (www.janinteractive.com). Examples of these include World Cancer Day, International Nurses Day, Men’s Health Month and Dementia Awareness Week. Otherwise, our detailed strategy is, clearly, sensitive but as a team of editors we regularly list the important issues from our own clinical, educational and international perspectives and seek to attract the leading authors and researchers in those fields. Our overarching strategy is, in addition to reflecting current issues and providing a forum for debate, that we play a leading role in shaping nursing policy and practice across the world.

As Editor-in-Chief of JAN I travel extensively and wherever I go – Europe, North America, Australia, Far East and South East Asia – JAN is recognized as a leading academic nursing journal. It is my privilege to continue to work with a superb team at Wiley and the best group of editors I could wish for. Regardless of how long my own association with JAN continues, in the words of James Smith, I am sure that the journal will continue to grow ‘Ad multos annos’.

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