Nutrition & dietetics: gaining momentum, moving forward

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Abstract
Nutrition & Dietetics is known as the journal of the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA), including Dietitians New Zealand. However, while always providing a forum for promotion of nutrition and dietetic research in Australia in particular, it has had a number of previous incarnations. Before 1987, the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health published Food & Nutrition: Notes and Reviews. At various times, this was managed by the Australian Institute of Anatomy, the Australian Department of Health Nutrition Section and the Department of Health Food and Nutrition Section. In 1987, DAA took over the journal and it became the Australian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics, from Volume 44-61. With the arrival of Volume 62 and a new collaboration with New Zealand, the journal became Nutrition & Dietetics.

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EDITORIAL

Nutrition & Dietetics: Gaining momentum, moving forward

Nutrition & Dietetics is known as the journal of the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA), including Dietitians New Zealand. However, while always providing a forum for promotion of nutrition and dietetic research in Australia in particular, it has had a number of previous incarnations. Before 1987, the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health published Food & Nutrition: Notes and Reviews. At various times, this was managed by the Australian Institute of Anatomy, the Australian Department of Health Nutrition Section and the Department of Health Food and Nutrition Section. In 1987, DAA took over the journal and it became the Australian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics, from Volume 44–61. With the arrival of Volume 62 and a new collaboration with New Zealand, the journal became Nutrition & Dietetics.

Nutrition & Dietetics has grown with the profession of dietetics in the Australasian region. Submissions for publication have tripled in the last 10 years. From a single dietetic program offered at the University of Sydney in Australia, dietetic education is now offered at more than 15 locations in Australia. In New Zealand, the University of Otago will be joined by at least one additional dietetic education program, which will offer New Zealand dietetics significant opportunity for expansion, with a potential doubling of graduates. Dietetics leads allied health professions in Australia and New Zealand with all dietetic programs targeting strong research outcomes and significant articulation of students from entry-level studies to higher degree research programs. Nutrition & Dietetics has been a nursery for researchers in our region, with significant numbers of publications sourced from Australia and New Zealand. It is a melting pot of research and practice and is unique in the region in this capacity.

What is the vision for our journal?

Recent years have seen not just a significant expansion in numbers of submissions for publication but also expansion across geographical areas, across practice domains and across a scope from basic sciences relevant to food and nutrition to highly specialised dietetic practice and significant community-based interventions. The continued trend of increased submissions has allowed and will continue to progress the quality of our journal. The current impact factor of 0.787 (first awarded in only 2010) will continue to improve with this quality and Nutrition & Dietetics must have a vision to be truly competitive with the leading dietetic association journals, the British Dietetic Association’s journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics and the Journal of the American Dietetic Association.

Nutrition & Dietetics is managed by an experienced management committee with dedicated and hard working editorial volunteers and a highly efficient administration team both within DAA and at the publishers. In meeting a vision of an internationally recognised dietetic journal, the management committee has recently made several key recommendations, which have been accepted by the DAA Board. It is critical to ensure that the journal is an effective resource for DAA and Dietitians NZ members, representing all domains of practice, but these needs are not disparate with a high quality journal.

Key elements that make a journal popular to researchers for publication include the length of time from submission to potential publication, acceptance rate (authors like their work to be accepted but recognise the value of publication in highly competitive journals with a high impact factor) and journal readership. Key strategies that have been adopted include commencement of early online access for accepted publications to commence in 2012, priority targeting of high quality innovative research, submission of an application for Medline listing and a continued engagement with the broader international community including our recent appointment of an international editorial board to assist in expansion of the pool of authors, reviewers and the readership.

In 2010, there was an increase of 7% in full-text downloads from Nutrition & Dietetics compared with the previous year and there is no reason to think that the positive trends cannot continue. The top-cited article in 2010 (published 2008–2009) was ‘Understanding food structure and function in developing food for appetite control’ by Lundin, Golding and Wooster and this provides insight into the admirable breadth of publications the journal contains. When the journal arrived at DAA, members could count the number of dietitians with PhDs on their fingers—no toes required. In 2011, there are more than 200 dietitians enrolled in or with completed PhDs in nutrition and dietetics in Australia, with proportionate increases in New Zealand. The dietetics profession is in rapid expansion. With this comes an advance in scholarship particularly in the area of translational research for which the discipline is renowned. This all means a forward trajectory of our journal, Nutrition & Dietetics.

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