

Editorial

Carpe diem

It is a great honour for me to be appointed as the tenth Editor-in-Chief of the *British Journal of Nutrition*. I would like to thank the Nutrition Society Officers, Council and Publications Committee for their support of my appointment to this post. The distinguished nutritionists who are my predecessors in this post instil in me a feeling of awe and I certainly hope that I can match their achievements with the journal. It is a challenging time for scientific publishing and nutrition is rapidly evolving as a scientific discipline. Thus, my period as Editor-in-Chief will undoubtedly be one of great change. My immediate predecessors, Keith Frayn (Editor-in-Chief 1996 to 1998) and Paul Trayhurn (1999 to 2005), also oversaw a period of rapid developments in scientific publishing and in nutritional science. However, through their enlightened stewardship, and with the support of those in the journal offices and at the publishers, the *British Journal of Nutrition* has evolved into a truly international journal, publishing high-quality science in a variety of forms.

I would like to highlight and pay tribute to some of the changes that have occurred under the editorships of Keith Frayn and Paul Trayhurn. The subtitle 'An International Journal of Nutritional Science' was introduced in order to signal that the journal should be seen as international. The Editorial Board was enlarged and made more international; currently the Board comprises over fifty members with representatives from Republic of Ireland, seven countries in continental Europe, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Canada and the USA. Deputy Editors were appointed to assist the Editor-in-Chief in the process of making decisions on submitted articles. Numerous other features were introduced. These include:

1. The publication of review articles.
2. The publication of supplements. Typically these have been publications of meeting 'proceedings', often being collections of short review articles. The topics of supplements have been wide-ranging and have included functional foods, metabolic syndrome, ageing, micronutrients in maternal and child health, prebiotics, pulses and human health, bioactive substances in milk, immunonutrition, phyto-oestrogens and appetite control.
3. The publication of short review-style articles on newly emerging areas, termed *Horizons in Nutritional Science*.
4. The publication of invited commentaries.
5. The publication of more articles linking nutrition to other areas of biology that are fast moving (e.g. neurosciences, functional genomics), whilst at the same time continuing to fully include the more traditional areas of nutritional science.
6. The use of category headings to highlight the range of topics published in the journal and to help to organise the contents page of the journal.
7. The provision (at a fee!) of the facility for authors to include colour plates in published articles; several articles have included these.
8. A new cover design.
9. Online submission and handling of manuscripts in order to modernise and streamline the process and to decrease the handling times for papers. Certainly, the enlargement of the Editorial Board coupled with online processing have together contributed to a marked decrease in length of time between submission and first decision.
10. The retention of full copyright of published articles by authors through Licence to Publish.
11. The provision to authors of a free pdf file of their article upon publication.
12. Online publication of each issue of the journal as it is published, so allowing subscribers immediate access.
13. Making the entire archive of the *British Journal of Nutrition* available online. This encompasses all issues right back to volume 1, number 1 published in September 1947 and represents an invaluable resource. By comparison, the online archive of *Journal of Nutrition* begins at 1997 (volume 127). Making the archive of the journal available online required significant expenditure by the Nutrition Society and I wish to thank the officers of the Society for the financial commitment they have made to promoting accessibility to the *British Journal of Nutrition*.
14. Free availability of online issues of the journal. Initially this was restricted to articles 2 years after their publication, but articles now become freely available 1 year after publication.

These changes over the last 5 to 10 years have had a great impact on the content and appearance of the journal, on the speed and efficiency of the reviewing process, on authors' rights to own and reproduce their published articles, and on accessibility of current and back issues of the journal to readers. In total these changes represent a huge leap forward in terms of the way the journal operates and the service that it offers authors, subscribers and the wider audience of readers. It is hoped that the changes have served to increase the appeal of the *British Journal of Nutrition* to authors and readers. Of course, further changes will take place. For example, one decision that has already been made, but is not yet in place, is to make available online to subscribers a prepublication version of accepted articles. Initially, this will be the corrected proof of the article, but it is likely that there will be a later

move to post online the accepted version of manuscripts in pdf form. This will make authors' findings available, at least to journal subscribers, much earlier than publication.

In order to be successful a journal must provide a good service to authors in terms of the speed and fairness of the reviewing process, the speed of the publishing process, and the appearance and availability of published articles. Furthermore, a journal must publish articles that other researchers wish to read and to cite, i.e. the articles must represent good-quality science in fields of activity in which others engage. Assessment of achievement, of quality and of progress has become paramount in many walks of life, notably within both academia and publishing. One means of making such assessments is the use of the impact factors of journals in which papers are published. Although there are criticisms of this approach (Seglen, 1997), impact factors have become well established and publishers and editors use them to assess the relative performance of journals. It is important that comparisons of impact factors between journals be done within a subject category rather than between categories. The impact factor of a journal is issued annually by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), calculated as the number of citations of papers published in the previous 2 years divided by the number of papers published in those 2 years. Thus, the impact factor for 2004 (issued in 2005) is based upon the number of citations during 2004 of papers published in a particular journal in 2002 and 2003 divided by the number of papers published in that journal in 2002 and 2003. Clearly this favours very rapidly moving areas of research. Hence journals such as *Nature*, *Science* and *Cell* have high impact factors (32.2, 31.9 and 28.4, respectively, for 2004).

My predecessor frequently used editorials to update readers on progress of the journal as assessed by impact factor and to highlight recent highly cited papers (Trayhurn, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005), and I intend to continue this exercise. The *British Journal of Nutrition* is listed in the Nutrition and Dietetics category of ISI Journal Citation Reports®. In 2004 there were 53 journals listed in this category, including review journals and journals in the area of obesity (e.g. *Obesity Research, International Journal of Obesity and Related Metabolic Disorders*). For the past 3 years the two highest ranked journals in the Nutrition and Dietetics category have been *Annual Reviews in Nutrition* and *Progress in Lipid Research*, with impact

factors of 6.8 and 6.0, respectively, for 2004. Table 1 lists the impact factors for the *British Journal of Nutrition* and nine comparator journals over the period 2000 to 2004. The comparator journals all publish a similar range of material as does the *British Journal of Nutrition*, including molecular, cellular, whole-body, human, clinical, public health and experimental animal nutrition and, in most cases, also farm animal nutrition. It is evident that the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* is firmly established as the highest ranked journal in this category that is not solely limited to publishing review articles. However, it is also evident that the *British Journal of Nutrition* is firmly ranked in the top ten nutrition and dietetics journals. In 2004 it was the fourth ranked journal in this category if review journals and journals devoted solely to obesity are excluded. It is also very clear that the impact factor of the *British Journal of Nutrition* has increased year on year since 2001, and that the magnitude of this increase has exceeded that seen for the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* and the *Journal of Nutrition* (Table 1). Incidentally, the impact factor of the *British Journal of Nutrition* was 1.71 in 1998 and 1.94 in 1999. The increasing impact factor is an indication that authors see papers published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* as being increasingly worthy of citing, perhaps an indication of increasing quality (real or perceived) of the material that we are publishing. Readers may be interested in the impact factors of our sister journals. For 2004 these were 2.2, 1.7 and 1.3 for *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* (ranked 14/53), *Public Health Nutrition* (23/53) and *Nutrition Research Reviews* (28/53), respectively.

Table 2 lists the articles published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* during 2002 and 2003 that were most cited in 2004. This table indicates the importance of supplements, review articles and the *Horizons in Nutritional Science* series to the improving impact factor of the journal. Although the articles published in 2002 continue to be cited (Table 2), they will not contribute to the impact factor for 2005, which will be based upon articles published in 2003 and 2004. Thus, it is very satisfying that the articles by Zittermann (2003) and Wood & Trayhurn (2003) continue to be well cited. Also it is encouraging that two articles published in 2004 (Trayhurn & Wood, 2004; Whanger, 2004) are already being well cited, receiving thirty-eight and twenty-six citations respectively at

Table 1. Impact factor of the *British Journal of Nutrition* and comparator journals over the period 2000 to 2004

	Impact factor				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<i>American Journal of Clinical Nutrition</i>	5.01 (3/51)	5.02 (2/50)	5.60 (3/50)	5.69 (3/53)	5.43 (3/53)
<i>Journal of Nutrition</i>	2.91 (7/51)	3.25 (5/50)	3.62 (4/50)	3.32 (5/53)	3.25 (7/53)
<i>Journal of the American College of Nutrition</i>	1.57 (18/51)	1.53 (22/50)	2.17 (11/50)	2.98 (7/53)	2.80 (9/53)
<i>British Journal of Nutrition</i>	2.42 (9/51)	1.99 (16/50)	2.49 (7/50)	2.62 (9/53)	2.71 (10/53)
<i>European Journal of Clinical Nutrition</i>	2.17 (11/51)	1.77 (20/50)	1.94 (18/50)	1.86 (19/53)	2.13 (16/53)
<i>European Journal of Nutrition</i>	2.06 (13/51)	2.13 (13/50)	1.64 (21/50)	1.68 (22/53)	2.09 (17/53)
<i>Clinical Nutrition</i>	1.39 (20/51)	2.46 (9/50)	1.55 (22/50)	1.19 (32/53)	2.02 (18/53)
<i>Nutrition</i>	1.51 (19/51)	1.43 (23/50)	2.27 (10/50)	2.32 (11/53)	1.96 (19/53)
<i>Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism</i>	0.66 (36/51)	1.01 (31/51)	1.08 (28/50)	1.81 (20/53)	1.07 (35/53)
<i>Nutrition Research</i>	0.72 (35/51)	0.60 (37/50)	0.79 (35/50)	0.72 (39/53)	0.57 (41/53)

Data are from Institute for Scientific Information Journal Citation Reports®.
Ranking amongst journals in the Nutrition and Dietetics subject category in parentheses.

Table 2. Articles published in *British Journal of Nutrition* in 2002 and 2003 that were most highly cited in 2004

	Type of article	Citations in 2004	Total citations to date
Zittermann (2003)	Review	23	61
Burdge <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Full paper	22	47
Noone <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Full paper	22	45
Burdge & Wootton (2002)	Full paper	21	49
Calder <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Supplement	19	52
Wood & Trayhurn (2003)	Horizons	18	42
Schley & Field (2002)	Supplement	13	26
Rowland <i>et al.</i> (2003)	Supplement	12	24
Cummings & MacFarlane (2002)	Supplement	12	19
Blaut <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Supplement	11	21
Saavedra & Tschernia (2002)	Supplement	10	22
Young <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Full paper	10	31
Wolever & Mehling (2002)	Full paper	10	26

Data were obtained from Institute for Scientific Information Web of Science® on 26 October 2005.

the time of writing. One of these articles is a review (Whanger, 2004) while the other was published as a *Horizons in Nutritional Science* article (Trayhurn & Wood, 2004), further indicating the importance of these types of article to the journal. These figures indicate that influential work in nutritional science, with high and immediate impact, is being consistently published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*. Whilst highlighting highly cited articles, it is important to note that about 80% of articles published in 2002 and 2003 have now been cited twice or more and that only about 10% of articles have not been cited at all (yet).

One argument against the importance of impact factor in indicating the 'value' of a journal is that the time frame over which it is calculated is too short to really reflect the impact that the articles that a journal publishes will have. Thus, an alternative statistic is the total number of citations made to articles published in a journal. Table 3 lists the total number of citations made to articles published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, irrespective of their year of publication, during the years 2000 to 2004; once again I list this information alongside that for the nine comparator journals. In 2004 articles published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* were cited 7204 times (Table 3). It is apparent that the total number of citations of articles in the journal has also increased year on year and that, based upon

these data, the journal is firmly ranked in the top four in the nutrition and dietetics category.

At the same time that the influence, or at least the relative influence, of the *British Journal of Nutrition* has been increasing, as judged by impact factor and total citations, so the journal has been publishing more articles. In 2000 the journal published 189 articles while in 2004 the figure was 231. Subscribers to the paper version of the journal will have noticed that issues have become noticeable thicker, while all readers (paper, pdf or online) will have perceived that articles are printed in a smaller font size in an effort to limit the increase in the number of pages of the journal.

One of the main future challenges will be the handling of the number of papers being submitted to the *British Journal of Nutrition*. For many years the journal received between 250 and 300 manuscripts annually, but 402 submissions were received in 2003, 539 in 2004, and it appears likely that more than 650 submissions will be received in 2005. The rise in the number of submissions strongly indicates that the appeal of the journal is increasing and, so, we must be doing most of the important things right. However, an increasing number of submissions increases the burden on the Editor-in-Chief. For this reason, two Deputy Editors were appointed from 1996 to share the handling of submitted

Table 3. Total number of citations of articles published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* and comparator journals over the period 2000 to 2004

	Total citations/year				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<i>American Journal of Clinical Nutrition</i>	23 484 (1/51)	24 081 (1/50)	25 118 (1/50)	27 083 (1/53)	26 010 (1/53)
<i>Journal of Nutrition</i>	13 222 (2/51)	13 971 (2/50)	16 622 (2/50)	18 359 (2/53)	19 891 (2/53)
<i>British Journal of Nutrition</i>	5515 (3/51)	5360 (5/50)	6205 (4/50)	7144 (4/53)	7204 (4/53)
<i>European Journal of Clinical Nutrition</i>	3590 (6/51)	3588 (8/50)	4181 (7/50)	4798 (6/53)	4931 (7/53)
<i>Nutrition</i>	1679 (16/51)	1938 (15/50)	2646 (13/50)	2900 (13/53)	3060 (13/53)
<i>Journal of the American College of Nutrition</i>	1477 (20/51)	1687 (18/50)	1751 (18/50)	2095 (17/53)	2137 (18/53)
<i>Nutrition Research</i>	1264 (22/51)	1270 (22/50)	1434 (21/50)	1362 (23/53)	1383 (23/53)
<i>Clinical Nutrition</i>	790 (27/51)	1024 (25/50)	982 (24/50)	1007 (25/53)	1132 (24/53)
<i>Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism</i>	596 (29/51)	666 (30/50)	766 (28/50)	827 (29/53)	798 (30/53)
<i>European Journal of Nutrition</i>	77 (49/51)	154 (45/50)	250 (39/50)	373 (37/53)	514 (33/53)

Data are from Institute for Scientific Information Journal Citation Reports®. Ranking amongst journals in the Nutrition and Dietetics subject category in parentheses.

manuscripts with the Editor-in-Chief. Prakash Shetty has now retired from his Deputy Editor post and I would like to thank him for his service to the journal. Since the number of papers being submitted is still increasing, I have decided to appoint not one, but two new Deputy Editors. One of these is John Wallace from the Rowett Research Institute, and the other is David Jacobs from the University of Minnesota. Susanne Klaus from the German Institute of Human Nutrition will remain in her post as Deputy Editor. The Deputy Editors represent a breadth of expertise in nutritional science and again represent the internationalisation of the journal. I am looking forward to working with them and with the rest of the Editorial Board. John Mathers will continue as Reviews Editor and he will now also take responsibility for the *Horizons in Nutritional Science* articles. Chris Seal will continue as Supplements Editor. Simon Langley-Evans has retired as Book Reviews Editor and I would like to thank him for his efforts in this, often thankless, role. This post will now be filled by Orla Kennedy, University of Reading.

Thanks to the efforts of my immediate predecessors, to those nutritional scientists who have supported the journal by submitting their best research to it and who have seen sufficient merit in the articles published to cite them in their own work, to the tireless work by the staff in the publications office, and to the loyalty of subscribers, I take on Editorship of the *British Journal of Nutrition* at a time when it is in excellent health. It is clear that this is a period of rapid and great change in scientific publishing and no doubt some difficult choices and decisions lie ahead. However, I give an assurance that I will act to ensure that developments do not disadvantage either authors or readers of the *British Journal of Nutrition*. Finally, I ask you all to continue to support and to contribute to further improvements in this fine publication. *Carpe diem*.

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