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Letter from the Editor: Welcome to OJOT!

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Welcome to The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy (OJOT)! OJOT has been a work in progress for the past two years and now it is my pleasure to introduce to you the first open access journal for the profession of occupational therapy. The purpose of OJOT is to provide the occupational therapy profession with a peer-reviewed, open access journal that publishes high quality articles with a focus on applied research, practice, and education related to the profession of occupational therapy. As our tag line states, the mission of OJOT is to provide open access to clinical solutions and educational resources.

With the advent of evidence-based practice, it has become necessary for the healthcare professions to increase the accessibility of research that can be used to improve practice. In order to stay relevant and visible in the realm of healthcare, occupational therapy must keep up with the changes in the healthcare professions and in society overall. As discussed by Hinojosa (2007), we live in a time of “hyperchange” in which “advances in knowledge and technology have made our lives more interconnected and complex” (p. 629). Information comes to us rapidly. Not only do occupational therapists need to be aware of hyperchange, but we also need to be innovators in the change process. According to Hinojosa, we must not ignore ideas because they do not fit with our current paradigm, but we must plan ahead and think fast to lead the profession in a direction that matches the society in which we live.

OJOT will be published exclusively online. Online publication is forward thinking, timely, and environmentally friendly. The internet provides an efficient way of disseminating and accessing scientific information, where many free and open access resources are available (Turk, 2008). In the last decade, internet use has increased rapidly. In 2011, the percentage of all adults using the internet had risen from 53% to 78% (Pew Research Center, 2011a). Among young adults, those numbers are even higher, with an increase from 72% to 95% of all young

adults accessing information via the internet in 2011 (Pew Research Center, 2011a). Among those who use the internet, 80% access health information online (Pew Research Center, 2011b). Because the general public does not have access to scholarly journals, however, the accuracy and currency of the information they receive is dubious. Online publication will provide an expedited process through which accurate, scholarly publications of occupational therapy information will become globally accessible more rapidly. The elimination of printed copies is also environmentally friendly. The submission, review, editing, and publication process will all be completed online.

OJOT is also an open access journal. Open access is a publishing method that allows unrestricted online access to articles published in scholarly journals (Laasko, et al., 2011). Over the past fifteen years, there has been a rapid growth in the number of open access journals (Laakso et al., 2011). The first open access journals were published in the early 1990s and there are now almost 5000 open access journals registered with the Directory of Open Access Journals. The percentage of authors publishing in open access journals has increased from 11% to 29% (Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005) and continues to grow. Many of these increases, however, have been among the science-based disciplines where open access has been more readily embraced (Nick, 2011; Zuber, 2008). Open access journals have also been more readily embraced by young researchers for whom the internet has always been a source of information (Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005).

An open access journal for the profession of occupational therapy will provide barrier-free, global access to clinicians, students, and academicians, as well as to the general public. In order for society to have a better understanding of our practice and our research, there must be accessibility to our scholarly publications. In developing countries, the available research

literature may be decades out of date. Even in developed countries, small institutions, such as hospitals, schools, and private colleges, may not have the funds to purchase large databases. With increasing journal prices, even large universities are reducing their print journal subscriptions (Nick, 2012). Open access journals have been shown to increase networking and increase connectedness on a global scale by providing scholars with unlimited, free access to scholarly publications (Nick, 2012). Occupational therapy, therefore, could benefit from an open access journal. Published content is available without a subscription fee. Readers worldwide will be able to access the latest occupational therapy research and innovative practice ideas free of charge regardless of professional affiliation with a subscribing library or institution.

Not only do open access journals remove financial barriers, such as subscription and access fees, but they also eliminate copyright and licensing restrictions (Suber, 2007). Authors who publish in OJOT will retain the copyright for their articles. There is no required copyright transfer agreement; therefore, authors will control any future use of the articles in publications such as course packs.

Another benefit to authors is that publishing in open access journals results in wider dissemination of research and quicker citing, which results in higher impact factors. Articles in open access journals are cited 36% to 176% more frequently than articles published in traditional professional journals (Nick, 2012). Because open access articles are more accessible, scholars are more likely to find and cite these articles in their work than those that are only available behind a subscription barrier (MacCallum & Parthasarathy, 2006). Eysenbach (2006) found that even after controlling for confounding variables, such as number of authors, publication record, and discipline, articles published in open access journals were twice as likely to be cited as articles published in traditional journals. Even when published in journals that are broadly

available in research libraries, open access articles were more widely read and cited than articles that were published in the traditional version of the same journal. Wagner (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on 46 research articles that examined the citation of open access journals from 2001-2009. Of these 46 studies, 39 reported a citation advantage for open access journals and 7 had findings that were inconclusive. None of the studies found a citation advantage for traditionally published journals (Wagner, 2010). Given these statistics, OJOT will likely benefit the occupational therapy profession by accelerating dissemination and readership of published research findings and innovative treatment ideas, giving us a higher impact factor.

An open access journal will also benefit the profession of occupational therapy through the impact it will have on clinical practice. There has been an increasing demand for evidence-based practice in the health professions. A primary requirement of evidence-based practice is a high level of information competency among clinicians (Nick, 2012). To assure best practice based on the most recent research findings, it is essential that the applied sciences get this information to clinicians in a timely manner (Nick, 2012; Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005). High journal prices combined with long publication times, however, make it difficult for many clinicians to access the current research literature (Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005). Open access speeds up scientific dialog among researchers and clinicians (MacCallum & Parthasarathy, 2006), thus improving evidence-based practice by improving the clinicians' ability to access the information and apply it to clinical practice (Turk, 2008).

The open access aspect of OJOT also benefits the consumers of occupational therapy. Through access to our scholarly publications, the general public will be better informed about the occupational therapy profession's domain of concern and the benefits that are gained in those areas through participation in occupational therapy services. The general public, as consumers

of occupational therapy, will ultimately benefit not only from the knowledge they are able to access openly, but also from the services of occupational therapists who will be better informed about the latest in research and practice ideas. To assist therapists, researchers, and the general public with finding articles that are relevant to occupational therapy practice, OJOT articles are expected to be indexed with several online sites, including the Directory of Open Access Journals, Free Medicine Journals, and Pub Med Central. A year after publication, it is anticipated that OJOT articles will be available through several search engines including AGELINE, Cengage, CINAHL, MEDLINE, OT search, OTDBASE, Ovid, PsycINFO, and RECAL Bibliographic Database.

Open access journals require authors to pay a publication fee. While paying a fee to publish is a widely accepted concept in the basic sciences, it is new to the health professions (Nick, 2012). According to the UC Berkley Library (2011), current publication fees range from \$695 U.S. dollars to \$5,000 U.S. dollars with an average of \$2,150 U.S. dollars. Every effort has been made to keep the publication fees for OJOT as low as possible. Currently, OJOT is charging a \$200 (U.S. dollars) publication fee that is due at the time of publication. For this \$200, an author's manuscript is peer-reviewed, copyedited, and published, while the author maintains the copyright for his or her scholarly work. To encourage more student publications, a student who is first author on a manuscript will pay a reduced, half-price rate. Studies show that only 18% of the time do the publishing fees come directly from the authors (Nick, 2012). Other sources of revenue for publication fees include grants, departmental funds, or administration resources.

An Advisory Board, an Editorial Board, and an Editorial Review Board made up of top scholars in the occupational therapy profession have assisted with the development of OJOT.

The Advisory Board oversees the work of the Editor-in-Chief, the Managing Editor, and the Editorial Board, and makes recommendations regarding the content and processes involved in publishing the journal. The Editorial Board assists with decisions regarding the content of OJOT and screens manuscript submissions. The Editorial Review Board provides blind peer-review of manuscripts based on expertise in their area of practice or research. Even in the planning stages of OJOT, the positive response from these professionals has been overwhelming. Many people have been invited to serve and many have graciously volunteered. All of the members of each of the boards have been providing us with invaluable advice and reviews and we continue to be amazed at their level of expertise in varied areas of practice and research.

Together with these professionals, we have been able to assemble our inaugural issue of OJOT. Included in this inaugural issue are articles in the categories of Applied Research, Topics in Education, and Opinions in the Profession. Thank you to the authors who have enthusiastically joined us on this adventure. We look forward to our continued, collaborative work on OJOT and hope that you find it beneficial. All manuscripts should be submitted online at www.OJOT.org.

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