New initiatives in *Journal of Physiotherapy*

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The Editorial Board of *Journal of Physiotherapy* endeavours to publish an informative journal featuring scientifically rigorous research with clear implications for the clinical practice of physiotherapy. We also seek to promote the journal and to acknowledge the contribution of those who support it. In keeping with these aims, the members of the Editorial Board are introducing several changes to the journal. Some changes will facilitate use of the journal by readers. Other changes are most relevant to authors who are considering submitting a manuscript to the journal. The remaining changes acknowledge the contribution of supporters of the journal.

**ScienceDirect**

One important change is that the journal has been made available in digitised form from ScienceDirect to institutional subscribers. This will enhance the visibility of existing and future papers in the journal. It will also facilitate use of the journal, by providing such facilities as hyperlinks within the text, automated export of citations, links to articles cited in the paper, links to other related articles and textbooks, and automated emailing of selected articles. Another benefit to readers is the RSS feed facility, which provides timely updates about the journal content that can be read by web-based, desktop-based, or mobile-device-based software.

**Registration of trials and systematic reviews**

The next changes relate to the submission of manuscripts to the journal. Since 2008, the journal has required that trials submitted for publication provide evidence of registration on a publicly accessible register (Askie et al 2006). This policy had produced some benefits. By appearing on a register, our trials are less likely to be overlooked by the authors of systematic reviews and by researchers planning future trials. However, the majority of benefits of registration occur when trials are registered prospectively: researchers are obliged to publish completed trials, any selective reporting of outcomes (eg, only favourable outcomes) is easily identifiable, and other researchers can know that a trial is underway so that it is not duplicated unnecessarily (World Health Organization 2009). Therefore, in 2012, the journal will begin accepting trials only if they are prospectively registered. Clinical trials are not the only type of research for which prospective registration has been recommended. Registration of systematic reviews has also been recommended in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement (Moher et al 2009). Soon after the PRISMA statement was released, its recommendations were adopted by the *Journal of Physiotherapy* (Elkins and Ada 2010). However, the recommendation to register systematic reviews has not been achievable due to the absence of a publicly available register. This year, a free, publicly available register for systematic review protocols – known as PROSPERO – has been established by the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination in York, UK. Currently, PROSPERO accepts both prospective and retrospective registrations. Therefore, the *Journal of Physiotherapy* is instituting the requirement that systematic reviews be registered, just as we have done with clinical trial registration. At some point in the future, we will mandate that these registrations are prospective. Therefore we encourage all potential authors to register their clinical trials and systematic reviews as early as possible.

**Cochrane systematic reviews**

The Editorial Board has also changed its policy regarding Cochrane systematic reviews. Although the publisher of Cochrane reviews allows them to be co-published in another journal, Cochrane reviews have not been accepted by the *Journal of Physiotherapy* in the past. We have now reversed that policy. Cochrane reviews, if suitably condensed, will be considered for co-publication. However, publication in the Cochrane Library does not guarantee acceptance and priority will still be given to reviews that identify substantial data and draw important clinical implications from the results.

**Appraisal index**

Another change that will benefit readers of both print and electronic versions of the journal is the introduction of an annual index of items in the Appraisal section of the journal. These include items such as critically appraised papers, clinimetric appraisals, and appraisals of clinical practice guidelines, books and websites. The annual index will appear in the last issue of each calendar year.

**Paper of the Year**

In recognition of the high standard of work performed by submitting authors, the Editorial Board has introduced a Paper of the Year award. The winning paper is chosen by a panel of members of our International Advisory Board who do not have a conflict of interest with any of the papers under consideration. The paper will be chosen from those published in a given calendar year and will be announced in the June issue of the following year. The Paper of the Year for 2010 has been awarded to the paper entitled *Mobility-related disability three months after aged care rehabilitation can be predicted with a simple tool: an observational study* by Catherine Sherrington and colleagues from Sydney (Sherrington et al 2010). This study found that, in people who have undergone inpatient rehabilitation, ongoing mobility-related disability is common and can be predicted with a high degree of accuracy with a simple tool. This information can be used to identify need for service provision and to tailor intervention to minimise disability. We congratulate Dr Sherrington and her co-authors.

**Review process**

The final two changes relate to the review process. We are extremely grateful to all the external reviewers for their evaluations of manuscripts we receive. In recognition of their invaluable support of the journal, we will list the
reviewers – if they agree to be identified – in an annual list on the journal’s website. This will include reviewers of both published and rejected papers from the previous year. Reviewers will not be linked to the paper or papers they have reviewed. The other change to the review process is that submitting authors will be given an opportunity to nominate individuals whom they believe may not provide an unbiased review of their manuscript. Up to three non-reviewers can be identified.

**Changes to the Editorial Board**

It is also timely to note recent changes in the membership of the Editorial Board. We acknowledge the contribution of Professor Kim Bennell, who decided to step down from the Editorial Board this year. Professor Bennell was appointed to the Editorial Board in January 2008 and she became Chair in February 2010. During this time, she has been a strong advocate for the journal and for the Editorial Board in many forums. We are grateful for her substantial contribution. Professor Rob Herbert was successful in being re-appointed to the board and, at this time, Associate Professor Michelle Sterling was reappointed for a further term. Professor Herbert was elected as Chair by the other members of the Editorial Board at the first meeting this year.

We are confident that these changes will improve the interest and accessibility of the *Journal of Physiotherapy* and look forward to its continued growth and increasing international presence.

**References**


**Websites**

www.prisma-statement.org
www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero

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**Finding papers from Journal of Physiotherapy**

From Volume 57 No 1 March 2011, papers from *Journal of Physiotherapy* are hosted by Elsevier and available from ScienceDirect for institutional subscribers. Back issues (to 2005) are also available on ScienceDirect for these subscribers. Papers are also available to members and individual subscribers from the APA website at JoP.physiotherapy.asn.au.