



Editorial

## Going forward, not straight.

Peter G Robinson

Welcome to the first issue of *Community Dental Health* to be published online only.

The journal has been marching ahead now for many years and has reached unprecedented levels of recognition in several aspects of quality. Our Impact Factor (a measure of how often our papers are cited) has risen to its highest ever level of 1.349. A record 383 manuscripts were submitted last year, and as we can only publish 11% of this number, peer review and natural selection combine so that only the very best papers reach the readers.

### *Changes in academic publishing*

Nothing is forever though, and as in the peloton, if you're not pedalling forwards you're going backwards. Academic publishing has been transformed since the previous editorial team (Mike Lennon and Michael Smith) reviewed the workings of the journal ten years ago. We are all used to reading material online now and information travels faster than ever. Online publication greatly facilitates academics' access to material, and hence their likelihood of reading it. It has also allowed Open Access publishing (where researchers pay to publish research rather than subscribers pay to read), which has become more common due to the ethical stance that research data should be freely available. *CDH* has allowed authors to choose Open Access for the last eight years, so that up to 20% of our papers are openly available from our website. There are also more academics trying to publish more papers. Only 5% of submissions now originate from the UK. Naturally, this growth in academic publishing is accompanied by an increase in the number of journals. It is important that *CDH* maintains its standing as a high-quality journal. We therefore spent a good part of last year reviewing many aspects of the journal so that we can continue to move ahead.

### *Online only publication*

The most obvious change is that you will only have been able to access this issue of *CDH* electronically. Consultations with BASCD and EADPH members revealed that nearly all of our readers prefer to read it in this format. Electronic publication also minimises our environmental impact, by reducing the carbon footprints associated with printing on paper and mailing the journal all over the world. Allied to this move, we are experimenting with different formats for presenting the papers. Please let us know which formats you prefer.

### *Early release of papers*

This major step forward allows us to make other important advances. We will now publish all papers as soon as they are accepted, ahead of publication. Early Access indexing will then log the papers on Medline as soon as the early releases go on to our website, rather than when published. We're making the most of all this haste by announcing the early releases on Twitter and with banners on our website.

### *Commissioned Reviews*

We will keep abreast of the growth in knowledge by commissioning expert narrative reviews, which will summarise the emerging understanding of key topics in public health.

### *Prioritising Systematic Reviews*

The fast pace of information means that subscribers must be confident that what they read is current. We have decided to prioritise the timely publication of systematic reviews in relevant subjects by accelerating peer review and fast-tracking their publication.

### *Opening the CDH Archive*

*CDH* has published many important papers over the years, which have progressed our understanding of population oral health enormously, and which are still relevant today. We are working with our publishers to open our archive of historic papers so that these papers will be freely and readily from our website, with open access links from online databases.

As you can see, these changes are major advances to the way the journal works. We have collaborated with BASCD, EADPH and our publishers to ensure that *CDH* remains at the forefront of publishing in dental public health.

What about that title? I had a particularly hippy teacher in the early 1970s, who loved the phrase. In that context, 'Going forward, not straight' was not advocating criminality, being direct or being gay, but was a call to move ahead, without being unthinkingly conventional or orthodox for their own sake. Let us know what you think about the direction we're taking.