

The reality of open access and the search for financial stability

A realidade do Acesso Livre (Open-Access) e a busca por estabilidade financeira

All articles published in the Brazilian Journal of Physical Therapy (BJPT) have gained great visibility in the national and international scene with the journal's indexing in the SciELO database and, more recently, in MEDLINE. The articles electronically published by the BJPT can also be accessed freely, without payment for access or subscription. If, on one hand, the adoption of the open-access system is an important step toward the dissemination and citation of the articles made available by the BJPT, on the other, it creates a distortion. How can a journal be financially viable if it does not charge for access to its product? The solution to this problem is far from trivial, but necessary for a journal of this magnitude.

The literature available through open access (OA) is digital, online, and free, in other words, exempt from certain restrictions imposed by the charge of fees and/or permission barriers¹ (i.e. copyright). Actually, this unpaid reality extends in chain-like fashion. The authors of scientific articles donate their work and their intellectual production to be available in OA. In the same way, the ad-hoc reviewers, who analyze and evaluate the articles submitted to the scientific journal, work voluntarily, and the editors of these journals take on responsibilities and commitments, also without pay. These voluntary workers are committed to science. Certainly, researchers and scientists receive a very different treatment with regard to their production compared to that of other areas such as music or movies, in which the authorship of the production is strongly anchored to copyright legislation.

In spite of OA, the available literature has production and dissemination costs. Most of the journals that offer articles online and in print version rely on an administrative infrastructure that guarantees the procedures for receiving, processing, and organization of the printed version and, in Brazil, the costs of translation are necessary for the quality of the English version. Given this scenario, the question that arises is how to pay the bill.

The BJPT has been reaching significant levels of indexing, which increase the visibility of its publications. But, as the journal grows, so do its operating costs. The BJPT now has financial support from the funding agencies CNPq-CAPES and FAPESP and from the educational institutions UFSCar, UFMG, UNINOVE, and USP. Although indispensable, this support is insufficient to cover the costs associated with technical and administrative personnel and translators, production, and dissemination of the journal. More recently, the Federal Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy (COFFITO) approved the request for financial support from the BJPT, which will be vital to fulfill the commitments relating to the human resource expenses of the administrative infrastructure.

In the attempt to keep the journal in circulation, the editorial board of the BJPT convened at Universidade de São Paulo in Ribeirão Preto on 6/18/2010 to approve the processing fee to be paid by the authors at the moment of submission of the article, as well as the end of the subsidy of the publication/translation fee, which is currently

charged when the article is accepted for publication*. We reiterate that the increase in the publication/translation fee corresponds, in reality, to the end of the subsidy that was given to the translation of the published manuscripts, transferring to the authors the full responsibility for the translation costs.

The purpose of these fees is to allow the BJPT to continue investing in the upgrade of its infrastructure, ensuring the continuity of the progress demonstrated by the journal in the last few years. In spite of the fees, the above-mentioned sources of funding are still necessary to meet our expenses. We, the editors of the BJPT, will continue to dedicate ourselves voluntarily to the responsibilities that are attributed to us. We take this opportunity to reiterate our gratefulness to the researchers who submit their articles to the BJPT, to the commitment of the editorial staff, to the efforts of the editorial board, and to the dedication of the reviewers who also contribute for free so that the BJPT can be maintained in conformity with the high standards required by the community.

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Reference ::::

1. Suber, P [Internet]. Open Access Overview. C. 2004-2006 [updated on June 19, 2007; quoted on July 7, 2010]. Available at <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>

* Rates for processing and publication/translation are available at www.rbf.org.br.