

# Open Access for Orthopaedic Sports Medicine

Embarking on a journey. Laying the foundation of a house. Writing the first chapter of a novel. Crafting a constitution. Initiating a new endeavor is an energizing, exhilarating, and slightly intimidating experience. With the publication of this editorial, the *Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine (OJSM)* announces its presence and its commitment to providing an exciting new publishing option in the field of orthopaedic sports medicine.

Our subtitle, *An Open Access Journal for Orthopaedic Sports Medicine, Arthroscopy and Knee Arthroplasty*, concisely proclaims our publication model and programmatic scope. The initial phrase, *open access*, is the key to understanding the essence of this new undertaking. It is a phrase that may be unfamiliar to many orthopaedic surgeons, so I will elaborate further on this terse description.

Open access offers an intriguing alternative to the still robust subscription model of journal publication. In the traditional system, a fee is charged for full access to journal content, either in the form of an annual subscription to the journal or through the online purchase of individual articles. Subscriptions may be held by individual readers or by institutions such as universities, hospitals, or professional consortia that share the content among many stakeholders.

In the open access model, no such toll is required to gain admittance to the complete content of each article. Any interested individual can read and benefit from each and every published work. Two major forms of open access exist. The first has been designated *green open access*. In this variant, articles published in traditional subscription journals become freely available to the public at a certain interval following initial publication, most commonly 12 months. *OJSM* is an example of the second major form, which is commonly termed *gold open access*. A gold open access journal makes its full content freely available to all readers immediately upon publication.

The concept of open access was first proposed several decades ago, but it needed the advent of the modern Internet to realize its full potential. The ubiquity of web access means that a journal can achieve widespread dissemination without print publication. The option of electronic-only publication has substantially lowered production costs and made open access economically feasible. Although the first open access journals were in the humanities, recent growth in the number of open access journals has been fueled by a burgeoning interest in the scientific, technological, and medical fields. It is estimated that 340,000 articles

were published in gold open access journals in 2011.<sup>5</sup> Of these, 120,000 were in the field of biomedicine, a dramatic increase from 7400 at the close of the 20th century. All told, about 11% of the 1.99 million articles indexed in Scopus in 2011 appeared in gold open access journals. An increasing number of universities and funding agencies are encouraging or mandating open access publication of articles produced by their faculty member or grantees.

Although this may be news to many orthopaedic surgeons, *OJSM* is not the first open access journal to appear in orthopaedic sports medicine. However, our aspiration is to be the most respected, authoritative, and widely accessed journal in the field. We aim to bring to *OJSM* the same reputation for scientific rigor and thorough peer review for which our subscription journals are known. *OJSM* intends to appeal to a truly international constituency of authors and readers. Thus, although the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine has provided our initial support, we are actively seeking to enlist similar societies from around the world to become partners in this undertaking. This is a major reason that we have included knee arthroplasty in our subject domain, since this topic is an interest of many orthopaedic sport medicine societies.

As an open access journal, *OJSM* offers a number of features designed to appeal to potential contributors. *OJSM*'s gold open access status fulfills the requirements of institutions and funding agencies that require open access publication. Article production is fast and efficient. Electronic-only publication frees our journal from the constraint of discrete issues, so that articles are published individually as soon as proofs have been finalized. Eschewing print also removes restrictions on article length or color illustrations and facilitates the inclusion of full data sets and video features. Upon publication, every article becomes immediately available to an unlimited worldwide readership. Studies have shown that this universal availability is translated into a greater number of article downloads<sup>2,4</sup> and possibly more citations as well.<sup>1,2,4</sup> *OJSM* intends that its quality standards will encourage the preferential downloading, reading, and citation of articles that appear on its pages.

Although online open access is a relatively low-cost publication model, it is, of course, still subject to the laws of economics. While some open access journals are financed by grants and subsidies, most offset their expenses through article processing fees that are charged if an article is accepted. There is some potential for abuse of this system by low-quality "predatory" publishers,<sup>3</sup> so the presence of an editorial board intent on maintaining a high level of scientific rigor is important to ensuring the excellence of an open access journal. *OJSM* has set its fees at a moderate level in comparison to current standards<sup>5</sup> and further

lowers these charges for authors who are members of sponsoring societies. In addition, article processing fees will be fully waived for authors from countries listed as low-income or lower-middle income by the World Bank.

As implied in our subtitle, *OJSM* will comprise an extensive variety of works. We encourage authors to submit original research, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses in the fields of orthopaedic sports medicine, including both surgical and nonsurgical treatment of sports injuries; arthroscopic surgery; sports epidemiology; knee arthroplasty; and clinically relevant foundational and translational research. Appropriate articles may now be submitted for peer review online (<http://submit.ojasm.org>). Come join us in this exciting new opportunity.



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