

# Australian Journal of General Practice responsive to the needs of our readers

Stephen A Margolis

‘Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.’

– Stephen Hawking<sup>1</sup>

Medical publications are increasingly confronted with a multitude of challenges in maintaining reader interest, attention and relevance. Pre-internet, medical knowledge was transferred almost exclusively by the printed word or physical attendance at meetings. Searching for information on specific topics required heading to the library building, exploring the printed Index Medicus catalogue and then searching through the bookshelves for the printed version of the paper.<sup>2</sup> From an initial slow start, the options for obtaining medical knowledge are now legion, ranging from traditional through to a range of alternative platforms. In addition to this, the volume and range of sources are increasing almost exponentially in the way medical knowledge is disseminated, as the accelerating increase in the efficiencies of technology, such as information gathering, and delivery now means that almost everything published is often a few mouse clicks away.<sup>3</sup> Yet this explosion in access is in parallel with a decline in the attention span of younger learners,<sup>4</sup> including early career medical practitioners.<sup>5</sup>

Concurrent with these challenges, publishers, such as The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, now have access to far more detailed and reliable

data on the choices our readers make with the material. Despite the challenges, the *Australian Journal of General Practice* (AJGP) readership remains solid across both the printed and online versions. Average print edition readership is 36,216 per edition (Audited Media Association of Australia 2022), online page views in 2022 were 2,772,100 (Google Analytics) and the total number of PubMed hits from February 2022 to January 2023 were 146,683 (National Library of Medicine).<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, there were approximately 37% of online readers in Australia, 29% in North America, 10% in Europe and most of the remainder in Asia. But perhaps of most interest is that the most-read articles were not predictable prepublication. Although almost all of these were clinical, the topics were eclectic and ranged from common problems through to the obscure.

The team at AJGP has been following the dynamics of change closely, and continues to tweak topics, authors and processes to ensure readers remain informed with the best of evidence-based medicine, provided through an interesting and informative format. In addition to each month's edition of a focused series of papers, AJGP now includes a range of themes forming longitudinal series with papers published across the months. Expansion of the number of themes per year has also enabled the AJGP to reach out to an increasing number of talented and interesting writers who are keen to share their knowledge and experience. In addition, this assists offering our readers an extensive range of material

that explores all aspects of general practice, encompassing the breadth and depth expected.

Successful medical publication is becoming increasingly complex, as the information environment becomes more crowded. AJGP is rising to this challenge, continuing to place the welfare of patients at the forefront by providing evidence-based, effective and interesting content for our readers.

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