

Editorial

Indexing JNDS – Journey to MEDLINE and beyond

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The successful launch of JNDS earlier this year has showcased high quality content, ranging from research highlights from our departmental away day to novel case reports. The challenge ahead is to ensure that a wide audience are able to read our articles. Indexing JNDS in academic databases allows a broad audience to access and engage with articles published; thereby increasing their impact.

Database search and literature review is often the first activity undertaken as part of any research study; hence it is critical for both our authors and readership that the articles are accessible and visible within established databases. Open Access, which is a core value of JNDS, is helpful in this regard.

All academic databases require adherence to core publishing standards, which include an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs), metadata from each article, a publishing schedule and a copyright policy. Different databases have further requirements which must be met, including a publication scope, publicly available peer review policy and publication ethics statements as well as information about the journal editors. Ours are available to view on the Journal website.

The MEDLINE / PubMed database (indexed by the National Library of Medicine) is the best known in Clinical Medicine and is considered the benchmark for all new Medical journals. The acceptance criteria of an aspiring journal into this database depends on the quality of published and editorial work, objectivity of published content as well as the journal credibility. Transparency of the peer review process, disclosure of author and editorial conflicts of interest as well as adherence to ethical publishing guidelines are also important in achieving acceptance. NLM usually only consider publications running for a minimum of two years, with at least 40 primary articles published.

JNDS is currently indexed in Google Scholar with content referenced by Crossref, although there are plans to expand to become indexed in other databases (including the Directory of Open Access Journals), with the ultimate aim of achieving MEDLINE / PubMed indexing as soon as possible. Just like the Google Search Engine, Google Scholar uses web-crawling robots to collect documents from the web, filter out the results and make them available via the Google Scholar interface. These “crawlers” require files that are small in size, specific file formats (either HTML or PDF) and freely available without logins. Specific meta-tags and server configurations are critical to “crawler” function. It was important to make sure JNDS complied with the above technical requirements before applying (via a Google Form) to be indexed in Google Scholar.

Crossref is a not-for-profit association which provides the technical and business infrastructure to interlink millions of items across a wide variety of content types via DOIs. A DOI is a unique string of numbers, letters and symbols used to permanently identify an article or document and link to it on the web. A DOI will help the reader easily locate a document from the citation. DOIs link to JNDS’s current journal content as well as from our journal to other publishers’ referenced content. The website platform required configuration to permit assignment of DOIs and a Crossref account to be made (JNDS is charged per DOI created to cover Crossref’s costs of maintaining their service).

There are some refinements that need to be made to the submission and reviewing process at JNDS to ensure compliance with MEDLINE’s policies. These include streamlining the internal editorial workflow for processing submitted articles as well as ensuring all considered articles are reviewed by two reviewers independent from the journal. It goes without saying that reviewers should have sufficient subject expertise, which the editors may not have. A robust editorial process requires balancing input from high-quality peer review. It is more than simply counting reviewer votes; one substantive review identifying irremediable methodological issues should outweigh other favourable reviews. Each review needs to be considered in detail and use their content, along with the article being reviewed to assess whether it is relevant, important and methodologically sound. In order to guarantee objectivity and no conflict of interests, reviewers should not be drawn from the editorial staff.

We hope you have enjoyed the articles published so far and join us on our exciting journey to PubMed.