

Open Access

Opportunity and Awareness

In recent years, Open Access (OA) has become a recognized force in the publishing world. OA is described as free, immediate, online access for all users web-wide, to digital scientific and scholarly material, primarily research articles published in peer-reviewed journals (Wolters Kluwer Health-LWW, 2015). In general, this is good news for nursing professional development (NPD) specialists. I am highlighting OA in this *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development (JNPD)* editorial for two reasons: to describe its basic principles and benefits, and to raise awareness regarding aspects of OA publishing that bear continued watching.

Material published as OA is essentially free to readers in forms specified by publishers and/or authors; usage rights depend on the type of Creative Commons license under which the work appears. No subscription is needed, and there is no charge to access OA material. Although content might be unencumbered by some copyright and licensing restrictions, users must be diligent. There may be limits on how material can be copied, distributed, changed, or displayed.

OA publishing was originally intended as a way for scholars to collaborate and share their work with a broadened audience. Research funders naturally want study results to be accessible quickly and to as many readers as possible. Authors, scholars, and publishers desire the same. Currently, there are nearly 10,500 OA journals listed in the *Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)*, (2015), and this number continues to grow. Various models of OA exist; “gold”, “green,” and “hybrid” refer to the methods by which OA content is provided. For example, gold OA content is immediately and widely available via an OA journal. Green OA material can be found in open university or other repositories, and hybrid material can be accessed free within an otherwise traditional subscription journal. Usually, gold and hybrid OA models require authors to pay an article processing charge that can range from a few hundred to several thousands of dollars.

The author has disclosed that she has no significant relationships with, or financial interest in, any commercial companies pertaining to this article.

JNPD offers a hybrid model of OA. Authors whose manuscripts are accepted for publication in *JNPD* have the option to make their work OA. This option is offered only *after* the manuscript has been carefully peer-reviewed. The choice to make one’s work OA is completely voluntary. Authors who choose to do so work with the editors and publisher to make their work free and accessible to all online users. More information on OA can easily be found via an Internet search. Some suggested sites are listed in the resources below. Authors, publishers, educators, and readers can all benefit from OA.

At the same time, where there is opportunity, there is also risk. Not all publishers and publications subscribe to ethical publishing practices. So-called “predatory” journals and publishers are a real threat and may take advantage of unwary individuals eager to see their work in print. The driving force behind these individuals or groups is to profit from unsuspecting authors. Scholarly works are often solicited, quick turnaround times are promised, and nearly all submissions are accepted, often with little or no peer review. Jeffery Beall, noted expert in the scholarly publishing field, provides an ever-growing list of rogue and predatory journals and publishers at <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>. I encourage NPD educators to periodically visit and review this and other reputable sites to stay informed and up-to-date as we advise and mentor others.

We might not yet fully appreciate the effect and influence of predatory publishing, but we need to be cautious not to base our practice on evidence that may lack validity, substance, or scientific rigor. We should be wary of incorporating flimsy or questionable evidence into our education programs, or referring articles to others without carefully vetting and validating sources. Our library and academic colleagues can be of great assistance when questions arise.

In 2014, the International Academy of Nurse Editors (INANE) decided to help “spread the word and disarm the threat” of potential predatory publishing dangers via various presentations, forums, and editorials (INANE Predatory Publishing Practices Collaborative, 2014). We are taking

this opportunity to participate in that effort. I am hoping this brief piece will spur NPD specialists everywhere to learn more about OA and to spread the word to the colleagues, peers, and students they interact with each day. Our practice is evidence based, and the evidence we rely upon must come from trusted, reliable sources anchored by integrity and ethics.

What does all of this mean for NPD specialists in our roles as readers, authors, and educators? As we embrace the concept of OA and reap the benefits of high-quality OA material, we must consistently assess the sources we use, contribute to, cite, and share.

Selected Resources

- Journal for Nurses in Professional Development website: http://journals.lww.com/jnsdonline/_layouts/oaks.journals/OpenAccess.aspx
- Wolters Kluwer-Lippincott Williams & Wilkins FAQ: http://download.lww.com/wolterskluwer_vitalstream_com/PermaLink/LWW-ES/A/LWW-ES_2013_05_08_OAFAQ_1_SDC1.pdf
- Directory of Open Access Journals: <https://doaj.org/>
- Beall's List: <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE): <http://publicationethics.org/>