A New Chapter for the American Society for Nutrition's Journal Portfolio

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From the Board of Directors of the American Society for Nutrition

Since the inaugural issue of *The Journal of Nutrition* in 1928 and the subsequent launches of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *Advances in Nutrition*, and *Current Developments in Nutrition*, the American Society of Nutrition (ASN) has built a strong reputation as the undisputed leader in nutrition science publishing. Today, the ASN journal portfolio is recognized worldwide for its outstanding leadership and exceptional content.

This past year, the ASN Board of Directors launched a strategic planning effort that evaluated current operations and future approaches in publishing. A task force was formed and led by the ASN Publications Committee Chair, Marta Van Loan, and the Finance and Audit Committee Chair, Sarah Booth; it also included ASN members Robert Bertolo, Stuart Phillips, and Emily Smith. The task force worked in collaboration with KWF Consulting, a leading management consultancy dedicated to the scholarly publishing community.

To ensure that ASN's publishing program remains vibrant and is ready to meet members' needs, the task force set forth to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing ASN's journal portfolio.

The task force recognized that important factors are affecting the scholarly publishing industry including growing interest and funder mandates related to open access (OA), library subscription budget cuts, increased competition including high-impact brand extensions and emerging OA–dedicated publishers, pandemic-related submission surges, and economic uncertainties.

The task force identified several themes that currently affect the publication experience, the portfolio's impact, and the Society's ability to keep up with industry trends. For example:

- Authors want faster publication speeds and better customer service, including fewer requests for changes, especially for nonsubstantive style and formatting issues. Better processes could reduce time to publication, making it more attractive for members to publish with ASN.
- Awareness of ASN's brand and reputation outside of the nutrition science community must be expanded, so that researchers working in fast-emerging fields that intersect with nutrition (e.g., microbiome) are more likely to submit to ASN journals.
- ASN journals reject many articles that ultimately are published in other reputable journals. Facilitating the transfer of manuscripts among ASN journals could provide more opportunities for members to publish within the ASN portfolio.

The task force's key recommendations aim at implementing best practices to improve the ease and speed of publishing with ASN; proactively attracting more high-quality content to ASN's journal portfolio, particularly in strategic, timely, and emerging areas; and broadening efforts to increase the discoverability of journal content through expanded communications support. Other recommendations focus on journal operations and oversight, delineation of journal scopes, establishment of a scientific statement and consensus guideline program, and continued planning for and actions related to an OA future.

Authors will begin to see improvements immediately. Hassle-free submission was recently introduced and reduces author workload, with limited formatting requirements for first-time submissions. ASN's Editors have collaborated to create a single "Instructions for Authors," establishing common guidelines across the ASN portfolio, and complying with recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and Committee on Publication Ethics.

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New processes facilitate the publication of research at the time of manuscript acceptance, which means that an author's research now reaches the community within days of acceptance. Technology to display 3-D images will soon enable the publication of 3-D body image and brain scans in manuscripts. A formal manuscript fast track is being developed to meet the needs of authors with groundbreaking results.

Finally, ASN recently became accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education (CME) credit for physicians. ASN plans to provide CME for high-quality reviews of its manuscripts in the near future.

The Board is grateful to all who provided valuable feedback to this process, particularly the task force, our Editors-in-Chief, and many ASN member authors and reviewers. We heard you, and you have our pledge to innovate our operations. We are fully committed to improving the publication experience through increased speed, simplified processes, reduced costs, and greater attention to author service.

The Board recognizes that all strategic plans evolve over time. Metrics are being developed to assess the plan, and the ASN's Publications Committee will work with our journal editorial boards to refine the plan annually.

To learn more about this effort, please visit www.nutrition.org/strategic-planning-for-journals-and-education/. Feedback on how we can better serve you is welcomed.

We know you weigh many factors when choosing where to submit your research, including speed, impact factor, and cost. We aim to be your first choice, as well as your best choice.

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