



Does journal ownership matter?

There are many factors to consider when deciding which journal is most suitable for your research: journal scope, journal-level metrics, reputation, cost to publish, whether it is open access or not – the list goes on. But should we also be considering who owns the journal and what this might mean?

Journals can be owned by commercial organisations, for-profit and not-for-profit publishers, and learned societies. For learned societies, journal publishing is a key activity to support the academic discipline they represent, and also a key source of revenue. For many societies, their main source of income is from academic publishing. However, what sets societies apart from for-profit journals is the investment of any surplus into supporting their strategic missions.

This is no different for the Nutrition Society. Originally starting with the *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* in 1944 to record and disseminate meeting proceedings, the Society now successfully publishes six journals across the spectrum of nutrition research. Whilst our journals play an important role in facilitating scientific communication, the activities of the Society go way beyond just this, with income made from publishing invested back into the scientific community and geared towards the Society's main aim – *'to advance the scientific study of nutrition and its application to the maintenance of human and animal health'*.

Despite diversifying our income portfolio in recent years, 80% of the Society's income still comes from journal publishing. Back when libraries had big budgets and the publisher was selling consortia deals of multiple journals to universities, this was a steady source of revenue. But now, against a backdrop of cOAlition S, a global shift towards Open Access and tighter budgets, this income is less certain than before. Publishing revenue enables us to keep membership rates low, to subsidise conferences, provide training and fund travel grants for members to attend international conferences. We also try to keep our article processing charges at a reasonable level. There are many other less tangible outputs that are financially supported by the journals, such as our influence on policy through our parliamentary work, and our support for the international nutrition community through training, grants and governance activities. None of these activities are possible without journal revenue, which is why it is my role, with the support of the Publications Committee, to oversee the publishing contract, work with our publishing partner to ensure our journals flourish and financial and operational matters are well managed.

Not only does the Society reinvest any profits back into the scientific community, so does our publisher, Cambridge University Press. We choose to publish with a university press because any profit is reinvested back into the academic community. As a not-for-profit organisation, Cambridge University Press continually reinvests its surplus into education. This creates a virtuous cycle where the scientific community benefits from the research that is published.

Beyond finance, a Society journal is also a mark of quality as each journal has a rigorous review process, publishing only the best science. Each of our journals has an expert editorial board and reviewers who review every submitted manuscript. The editors and reviewers can be thought of as the publishing gatekeepers, responsible for evaluating the quality and validity of manuscripts, ensuring that only well-designed, scientifically sound work is published. Whilst these rigorous processes take time, they guarantee high standards are maintained and ensure the quality of what is accepted for publication.

As part of our investment in the journals, we are currently running mentoring schemes to train the next generation of reviewers and board members. We offer rewards to editorial board members to acknowledge their commitment to our journals and are looking at ways offer rewards to reviewers to thank them for their time. This is part of our continued investment in the nutrition science community.

If you would like to know more about how you could get more involved with our journals, visit: www.nutritionssociety.org/journals or contact office: @nutritionssociety.org.

Upcoming events

Irish Section Conference – Promoting optimal nutrition for people and planet

11-13 June 2024, Technological University Dublin, Ireland
www.nutritionssociety.org/events/irish-section-conference-promoting-optimal-nutrition-people-and-planet

Nutrition Society Conference 2025

1-2 July, Burleigh Court, Loughborough, UK
www.nutritionssociety.org/events/nutrition-society-conference-2025

Nutrition Futures Student Conference 2025

4-5 September, London, UK
www.nutritionssociety.org/events/nutrition-futures-2025

