

Journal of Medical Screening

Editorial

JMS Online at a screen near you: www.jmedscreen.com

This issue of *Journal of Medical Screening* sees the launch of JMS Online—a full text, sophisticated website. The internet has long been an invaluable resource for science and medicine, and many publishers have recognised its potential to disseminate research and to increase awareness of their journals internationally. A few years ago there were fewer than 100 journals online, now there are thousands with an exponential rise in the number expected to occur over the next few years. An article in *Nature* predicted that a journal without a full text web site is heading for extinction.¹ JMS has had an internet presence for some time but its web site was rather basic (just tables of contents and general information). The new site has the same address—www.jmedscreen.com—but it is much more sophisticated.

JMS has joined its cousin the *BMJ*, and other medical journals, at HighWire Press, a division of Stanford University's Green Library. HighWire's mission is to "foster research and instruction by providing a more direct link between the writers and readers of scholarly materials".² As visitors to the *BMJ*'s web site (www.bmj.com) will know, online journals can have many features that add value to the important research contained within the print version. One of the many benefits of being part of the HighWire stable is that all publishers agree to share "toll free links"—this means that references to any of the more than 200 journals hosted by HighWire link directly to the full text of that article without any subscription charges. In addition, the BMJ Publishing Group aims to join the CrossRef initiative whereby references will link directly to articles in participating journals regardless of where they are hosted. Access to full text will be determined by the individual publisher. References to non-HighWire journals already link directly to the Medline listing where available and we are working towards similar links to ISI's Current Contents. These hyperlinks are just one of the ways in which we hope to exploit the mass of information available online.

Each new issue of JMS will be available in full, including figures and tables. Full text articles have downloadable "printer friendly" pdf files so you don't have to read them on screen. There is a fully searchable archive of the journal going back to March 1997, as well as some abstracts and all tables of contents from earlier issues. It is possible to search across all or a selected set of the more than 200 HighWire journals which cover many aspects of clinical medicine and basic science. Email @lerts will automatically alert you when a new issue is available; these will soon be customisable to your particular area of interest. The "Collections" feature allows you to search quickly for material in subspecialty areas and this feature links directly with the *BMJ* and other specialist journals in the BMJ Publishing Group stable.

JMS Online

Journal of Medical Screening

JMS Online will be more than just an electronic version of the print journal. The benefits of cross journals searching and linking are immense. Letters can be submitted online and posted within a few days (subject to editorial acceptance). These will appear later in the print version. Multimedia features can be added, including video and audio clips. The future may well see: immediate online publication of important research; important results from major conferences highlighted within days; interactive educational material; and virtual journals customised by the reader. In addition, we plan to introduce online submission and peer review of papers within the next year or so.

JMS Online will initially be free to everyone. When access controls are put in place in the new year it will be free to subscribers and NHS personnel. Access to the electronic edition of the journal will also be provided free to those from countries defined as poor under the human development index by the United Nations and the World Bank (URL <http://www.worldbank.org/data/databytopic/class.html>) through the use of Digital Island. This clever piece of software recognises where the user is coming from and will give unrestricted access to the whole web site to users from those developing countries we choose to designate. Online only subscriptions will also be available.

Each issue of JMS will be posted online at the same time as the print version is distributed; therefore, readers outside the UK will not have to wait for days or weeks to enjoy the journal. Furthermore, JMS Online will form an integral part of that portion of the National Electronic Library for Health that forms the website of the National Screening Programme. The journal gratefully acknowledges the support given by the National Screening Committee.

We hope readers will appreciate this JMS development.

N J WALD

Editor

R HARVEY

Managing Editor

1 Butler D. The writing is on the web for science journals in print. *Nature* 1999;397:195–200.

2 About HighWire Press. highwire.stanford.edu/about.shtml