10-Year Milestone for Research in Gerontological Nursing
Trends Affecting Scientific Publishing

This year marks Research in Gerontological Nursing’s (RGN’s) 10th anniversary as the leading journal dedicated to disseminating research on gerontological nursing. Although the past decade has brought changes in research and publishing, RGN’s goal has remained constant: to disseminate the highest quality research that will advance science and health care for older adults. In that time, RGN has gone from a quarterly publication to bimonthly in 2014, is now one of a select number of journals listed in Thomson Reuters Scientific Citations Index, and is cited in the Medline bibliographic database. Our latest survey revealed that 46% of our readers spend ≥1 hour reading each issue, and online page views for RGN over the past 4 years have more than doubled. Our anniversary provides a suitable occasion to discuss four trends affecting science and the publication of scientific papers in the past decade: globalization, multiple authorship, advances in theoretical and methodological sophistication, and a growth in the number of journals publishing in the field. Each of these developments has been deeply influenced by the rapid growth of the internet and inexpensive wide-bandwidth communication.

GLOBALIZATION
One need only look at the multiple countries of origin represented by PhD and postdoctoral students to see the increased globalization of science. The United States continues to dominate in global production of research papers, but China and East Asia have dramatically increased published research (Ware & Mabe, 2015). Although research publications from other countries have shown a steady increase, we have not seen enough research in gerontology that involves international collaborations. Most of our understanding of older adult health needs and the effectiveness of interventions comes either from a North American perspective or small geographical regions that are not generalizable. We have not parsed, for example, which health behaviors or management strategies are culture-dependent or -independent. As scientists, we study the human condition in total, and a diversity of ideas and knowledge is critical to understanding the complexity of human needs, strengths, and resources.

Other cultures can draw North American researchers out of circumscribed ethnocentric frames of reference and broaden our understanding of possible interventions and perspectives. Increasing emphasis on the scalability of best practices for interventions in global peacebuilding and health is needed. Globalized research requires a common language and is not without operational challenges. Developing countries may have inadequately trained researchers and may introduce new layers of regulation into a study. But testing new treatments in poor regions of the world may have the greatest impact on morbidity and mortality, bring research to populations that have previously been underrepresented, and help advance science and understanding of the human condition.

MULTIPLE AUTHORSHIP
The number of authors per publication has been increasing in scientific publications (McDonald, Neff, Rethlefsen, & Kallmes, 2010). The ability of individuals from multiple distant locations to work on the same project has been eased by electronic information and communication transfer capabilities. The increase in multi-authorship is largely a consequence of increased collaboration and complexity of studies that require expertise from multiple individuals and disciplines. This increase is good news for our science and reflects progress in our willingness and ability to tackle the large and complex problems vexing older adults and health care. Numerous guidelines and customs specify that all co-authors must have contributed to the preparation of the manuscript and be able to explain and justify the major parts of a study. Waning authorship standards, such as gratuitous authorship, are an area of continued concern in scientific publication; RGN controls this problem through adherence to the Recom-
mendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals (Fees, 2015) of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION

The rapid growth in biobehavioral measures, big data and analytics, automatic sensors, research instrumentation, and other technologies offers many opportunities for investigators to examine underlying mechanisms of action and measure outcomes more precisely. Empirically validated explanations for why x causes y and for the processes by which an intervention yields outcomes are critical to advancing the quality of our science. RGN strives to bring our readers both review and methods articles that describe advances and innovations that can inform their programs of research.

New technologies can yield an abundance of data, which, if explored in thoughtful and meaningful ways, hold promise for rapid advancements in science. Increasingly, researchers want access to data from research studies in journals so that they can explore the data analytics themselves and conduct their own data mining. These data are generally available in repositories, and Healio* (access http://www.healio.com/nursing/journals/rgn) has been used to provide our readers with more explicit descriptions of interventions, fidelity plans, and measurement training materials.

GROWTH IN JOURNALS

The number of journals publishing scientific papers has accelerated in recent years, with approximately 28,100 peer-reviewed English-language journals and 6,450 non-English-language journals in 2014 (Ware & Mabe, 2015). We must ask ourselves if this growth is strengthening or weakening our science, the impact of our science, and the credibility of our dissemination products. It is ever more important for scholars, scientists, and practitioners to support journals that maintain standards of quality for publishing. The rampant publication of poor-quality science without adequate peer review will ultimately harm the progress of science. Worse, this science can inform care in a way that could potentially harm patients. The process of sorting high-quality research from flawed studies is central to advancing science. RGN has a cadre of stellar reviewers who take their role in performing peer review seriously. After 6 years as Editor, I continue to be impressed with the quality and timeliness of our review process. We publish a balance between qualitative, non-experimental, and intervention studies. Our open access option ensures publications in RGN are widely accessible to the global research community.

SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVES

RGN has continued to mature and develop into the top journal in gerontological nursing research. We publish clinical gerontological science in areas where the needs are greatest and dissemination can have the largest impact. Appropriately, most manuscripts submitted are the bench research needed to develop effective clinical interventions. Intervention studies are well-designed, informed by theory and evidence, and use appropriate univariate and multivariate analytical modeling.

During our 10 years, we have reported many important research advances in older adult health and health care. Despite RGN’s successes, too many problems remain unsolved and too much of the care delivered to older adults is not based on solid intervention research. We see a tremendous opportunity to continue making a significant impact on the health and quality of life of older adults in the United States and world beyond.

Our successes can be attributed to the strong support of our publishers, editorial board, reviewers, and loyal readers and contributors. To broaden our online presence, we now have active Twitter* (http://twitter.com/rgnjournal) and Facebook* (https://www.facebook.com/SlackNursingJournals) accounts that we encourage you to access. In closing, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to producing a high-quality and ethical scientific publication and thank all of you for 10 years of strong support for RGN.

REFERENCES


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