

EDITORIAL

Increasing access to medical information

There has been a lot of debate within medical and scientific journals in relation to opening up access to the journals electronically. The existence of the internet has made available the option of providing free and open access to all individuals who can access a computer with internet facilities. Journals such as the British Medical Journal have, for a limited period of time, made the contents of their journal freely available to all. Many of the journals that provide open access, however, charge authors and their institutions to publish articles in their journal. Such an approach has inherent problems in that it discourages researchers from the developing world and also young researchers who do not have institutional backing to publish their findings in such a journal.

Observant readers will be aware that Paediatric and Perinatal Drug Therapy already provides open access to articles (both original and reviews)¹. This facility is provided through the Librapharm website (www.librapharm.com/paediatric.php). Articles are published in their final format on this website and are usually available for a period of 2–3 months.

We would welcome comments from readers as to their opinions on the provision of this facility. We would also welcome the comments

of the two societies associated with the journal, the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group and the European Society for Developmental, Perinatal and Paediatric Pharmacology. In particular, we would like to ascertain the views of both individual members and the societies as a whole as to what extent we should increase the availability of access of the contents of the journal to non subscribers. Readers will be aware that Paediatric and Perinatal Drug Therapy is still a relatively new journal. In order to ensure its survival, we do need to generate some income. Should open access be restricted to individuals who work within the public sector, i.e. hospitals and universities? We are keen to increase access to the contents of the journal while at the same time trying to ensure that we remain commercially viable.

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Reference

1. Choonara I, Nunn A J, Kearns G. FastTrack publication. *Paed Perinat Drug Ther* 2004;6:74

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