

## The changing of the guard

This will be my last Editorial as I step down as Editor in Chief after 16 years. It has been an honour and a privilege to lead the teams that have brought the journal to the members of the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA), to our New Zealand colleagues and indeed across the globe. It is no coincidence the September issue focused on the Millennial Dietitian,<sup>1</sup> marking our move to embrace and celebrate generational change, a key component of a successful and sustainable profession. Please join me in welcoming Judi Porter PhD FDAA as the new Editor in Chief. Like me, Judi had previously served as Associate Editor, and later took on the specialist editor role managing Systematic Literature Reviews and then Editor. We have enjoyed working together the last couple of years enabling this smooth transition.

There is much to ponder over scientific publications, particularly in recent years. The Editorial in the February issue<sup>2</sup> provided an historical account of *Nutrition and Dietetics*, which was originally entitled *Food and Nutrition Notes and Reviews* through the Australian Institute of Anatomy.<sup>3</sup> It marked the celebration of the journal's 75 year history and noted the significance of research informing policy and practice. Today, research published in *Nutrition and Dietetics* is undertaken across a broad platform. The related policies and practices take many shapes and forms, but the core value remains as a commitment to publications that address the nutritional health of individuals and populations.

Research is an international enterprise, and protecting health is a universal challenge. Standards for conducting and reporting on health research are set at the global level. These standards have special significance where research is taken up in decisions on policy and practice. Peer review underpins publication, and in many areas now, groups of peers have developed standards to assist colleagues in this process. Our guidelines to authors<sup>4</sup> demonstrate our commitment to quality reporting in health research. We reference international biomedical reporting standards as outlined by the EQUATOR network.<sup>5</sup> The journal is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)<sup>6</sup> and is listed on Medline. Given their significance in contributing to evidence review, some study designs require special attention. Reports on Randomised Controlled Trials that provide direct evidence of effects require trial pre-registration and scientific reporting

according to the CONSORT statement.<sup>7</sup> Likewise epidemiological studies reporting associations need to meet STROBE requirements, which have also undergone review for nutrition evidence specifically.<sup>8</sup> As with RCTs, reports providing systematic review of evidence and meta-analysis also require prospective registration and international standards of reporting.<sup>9</sup> The move by *Nutrition and Dietetics* to have specialist editors to cover these areas reflects our commitment to high quality publication in the nutrition sciences. Sharing expertise in these areas also helps build capacity within the profession (and here I recognise the long standing contribution from our statistics editor, Marijka Batterham PhD MMed Stat Adv APD.)<sup>10</sup>

These standards set the tone for the journal but do not detract from other research that is more translational in nature, and closer to practice. Smaller contextual studies that report local observations, evaluations of models of care or aspects of health services, in depth analyses of social and environmental conditions, dietary methodology studies and research into professional education are all highly relevant. These studies add to the understanding of how to address nutrition related health problems. Standards for publishing still apply, including considerations of the sampling, methods of data collection, methods and rigour in analytical techniques, and overall reporting.

That said, research is fundamentally a creative and very thoughtful exercise. Like a good story, written publications address a line of intrigue. In addition to scientific rigour, it needs the attention of the reader. The topic should present a novel concept or be a significant addition to something already known. This presents a challenge to the profession, to think deeply on the issues that matter and master the methodologies that enable a valid line of argument to be made. Moving forward in the discipline involves looking in the mirror. It means defending an identity that is well respected in broader scientific circles and is reflected in quality research. Our journal, *Nutrition and Dietetics* provides an important conduit. It has a proud history, full of the commitment of a great many authors, reviewers, editors, publishers and administrators. It behoves the profession, and in particular its senior members, to identify with this quality professional resource, actively engaging to maintain its heritage and ensure an effective future.

*Nutrition and Dietetics* remains a quiet achiever in an expansive field, where the business side of scientific

publishing has become all the more apparent. Metrics such as Impact Factors and Citations,<sup>11</sup> combined with expectations of fast tracked publication and open access have created a significantly challenging environment. Issues arise such as the volunteer nature of peer review, the link between practice and research, and the relevance and purpose of the journal content. This has to do with how knowledge is generated and by whom, and how it is utilised in developing health policies and practices. The journal provides a tool for the profession to move on and have an influence. A perfect challenge for the next generation!

I would like to recognise and thank all those who have gone before me and all those who have travelled with me on the journal team so far. In particular I would like to thank the Australian, New Zealand and international members of the Editorial Board, key staff at Wiley publishers and the various members of the DAA management teams for all their efforts over the years. Finally, a special best wish goes to Judi Porter for taking on the leadership role now.

#### FUNDING

No funding was received for the writing of this editorial.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

At the time of publication the author was the Editor in Chief of the journal, *Nutrition and Dietetics*.

#### AUTHORSHIP

The author is solely responsible for the content of this paper.

Linda C Tapsell PhD FDAA FNSA AM, Editor in Chief,  
Nutrition and Dietetics, Senior Professor

*School of Medicine and Illawarra Health and Medical  
Research institute, University of Wollongong,  
Australia*

#### REFERENCES

- Collins J. Generational change in nutrition and dietetics: The millennial dietitian. *Nutr Diet*. 2019;76:369-372.
- Tapsell L. Inter-professional, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral dietetic practice. *Nutr Diet*. 2019;76:3-5.
- National Library of Australia. Food and Nutrition Notes and Reviews. (Available from: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/5680977>, accessed November 5, 2019)
- Nutrition and Dietetics. Journal of the Dietitians Association of Australia. Author Guidelines. (Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/17470080/homepage/ForAuthors.html>, accessed 5 November, 2019)
- Equator Network. Enhancing the quality and transparency of health research (Available at <http://www.equator-network.org>, accessed % November, 2019)
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (Available from <https://publicationethics.org/>, accessed November 5, 2019)
- CONSORT: Transparent reporting of trials. (Available at <http://www.consort-statement.org/>, accessed 5 November, 2019)
- Lachat C et al Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology—Nutritional Epidemiology (STROBE-nut): An Extension of the STROBE Statement *PLoS one*, 2016; 13(6):e1002036.
- PROSPERO. International prospective register of systematic reviews. National Institute for Health Research. (Available from <https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/>, accessed 5 November, 2019)
- Batterham M, Neale E, Martin A, Tapsell L. Data mining: Potential applications in research on nutrition and health. *Nutr Diet*. 2017;74:3-10.
- Lo KKH, Wong AHC, Tam WWS, Ho SC Citation classics in the nutrition and dietetics literature: 50 frequently cited articles. *Nutr Diet*. 2016;73:356-368.