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*In this number*

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## The Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health e-revolution

Committed to giving as many benefits as we can to our readers, while ready to assume some of the inherent risk we have decided to launch an *e-JECH*. This is a pioneering decision among the epidemiology and public health journals. From the next issue we will publish monthly and simultaneously a paper and an electronic version of the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. As other journals of the BMJ Publishing Group have already successfully done, for an experimental period, we will offer a full text, free access and interactive web journal.

Health communication is, nowadays, one of the most developed areas on the web. The e-revolution, which is carrying social structural changes, has already touched scientific publishing. Consequently, in this environment, many changes are going to take place in the short-term. The constraints imposed on the available space in paper copies will disappear in the e-publications, also the role of the peer review process in filtering the scientific information will be much diluted in so far as there are in the web a growing number of deposits of non-peer reviewed papers. Finally, tools like Central PubMed, or others, will permit readers to obtain a full text copy immediately of their searches in the scientific literature. But these are the sparks of the bigger fire. All analysts agree in forecasting even greater changes in the next five years! We are going very quickly to a virtually infinite, less controlled, historically new space for scientific communication.

The effects of this dramatic e-revolution are important not just for readers, but also for authors, editors and publishers of journals. As readers, on the one hand, we know that the electronic publishing reinforces one of our fundamental rights: our right to information. The web allows us to consult messages from its original sources, so we can contrast information sifted by successive filters. Therefore, most of us feel a little bit more of freedom than 10 years

ago. But, on the other hand, we often realise that having more information freedom does not mean being better informed. The internet has plenty of good places but also some noise and e-pollution. In so far as we increasingly e-surf, we will need good e-compasses, not to control our e-journeys but to guide and orientate us in this e-environment better and safely.

Authors will reach wider audiences, and they will be able to better measure the impact of a particular article. Not just by using the traditional, often criticised, measures of a journal's impact factor but by measuring each visit to the papers and its own record of citations. Also, it will be easier for them to interact with readers and to publicly debate on different topics.

For editors and managers there is an urgent need to redefine our role and to incorporate new functions to better meet the e-compass needs. From our point of view, quality will make the difference. And for this new e-reality, quality does not just mean good themes, good writing, but also, briefly, good lay out, good photos, good sound, good videos and democratic ways of interaction. And last, but not least, with a human touch.

We enter in this new stage of the journal's life with plenty of illusions. We are curious as well on how the experience will throw light on the great number of uncertainties we share with other editors of journals at the present time. Our future heavily depends on your behaviour and preferences as readers and authors, so please give us feedback, have a look at [www.jech.com](http://www.jech.com) and just share with us what you learn in your personal journey.

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