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Europa Medicophysica and its "Free full text" in Internet: toward the first Open Access of a general rehabilitation journal

S. NEGRINI

Chief Editor Europa Medicophysica
ISICO, Italian Scientific Spine Institute, Milan, Italy

Whether open access (OA) e-pub journals will usher in a new era in scientific publishing is anyone's bet because no one knows if open access will substitute print editions or simply join them. But what is sure is that communicating research throughout the world will never be the same again.[1] In this issue of Europa Medicophysica, the special article by Elena Giglia,[1] explains OA and the Internet-enabled opportunities for disseminating results of research studies. The journal's Editorial Board, together with the Boards of SIMFER and MFPRM, has decided to move forward with these advances in communication: from 1964, when the journal was first published,[2] to 2004 with Medline/PubMed listing,[3] by 2008 when, thanks to Minerva Medica, both online OA e-pub and in print editions will be available. Nearly one year ago preparation began for setting up the current "Free Full Text" (FFT) version of all printed articles (*i.e.* all articles are freely available and printable in Internet without limitations but the copyright remains with the Editor), and will culminate next year with the full OA.[1] Few journals offer both print and OA editions:[1] viewing our past achievements, we recognized the advantageous prospects that OA offers authors, journals, and the research and clinical community.

Advantages for authors

The main aim of authors of scientific papers is to obtain significant results that may lead to changes in the clinical behaviours of peers either directly or through other studies based on their data. This means trying to spread their results as best possible. This used to be done through print journals kept in university and hospital libraries where other people could read them. But today Internet has changed all that... The majority of clinicians read reviews retrieved by systematically searching literature databases using electronic search engines such as Medline in medicine (but others like Google Scholar are becoming popular as well).[1] So, it seems that for an author the only way to be read is by appearing in Medline. On the other hand, once retrieved through Medline, a paper needs to be read in its original version, and here problems arise. The soaring number of research papers (684182 in Medline in 2005 *versus* 533610 in 2001, amounting to a 28.2% increase in 5 years) has also made it generally difficult to retrieve original papers. The solution is OA (and FFT): three or four mouse clicks bring readers the full paper in Internet, which can then be printed without problems of copyright (Figure 1). This is a kind of magic for interested readers and authors alike.

Another advantage OA has for authors is that it allows them to reproduce their paper, e-mail it, post it on their own web site or that of their institutes. In fact, once the commercial rights are granted the publisher, provided that the original publication is cited, the paper can be freely reproduced and circulated. This serves the authors' aim to be read and that of the reader to access

Address reprint requests to: S. Negrini, ISICO, Via Carlo Crivelli 20, 20122 Milano, Italy. E-mail: stefano.negrini@isico.it

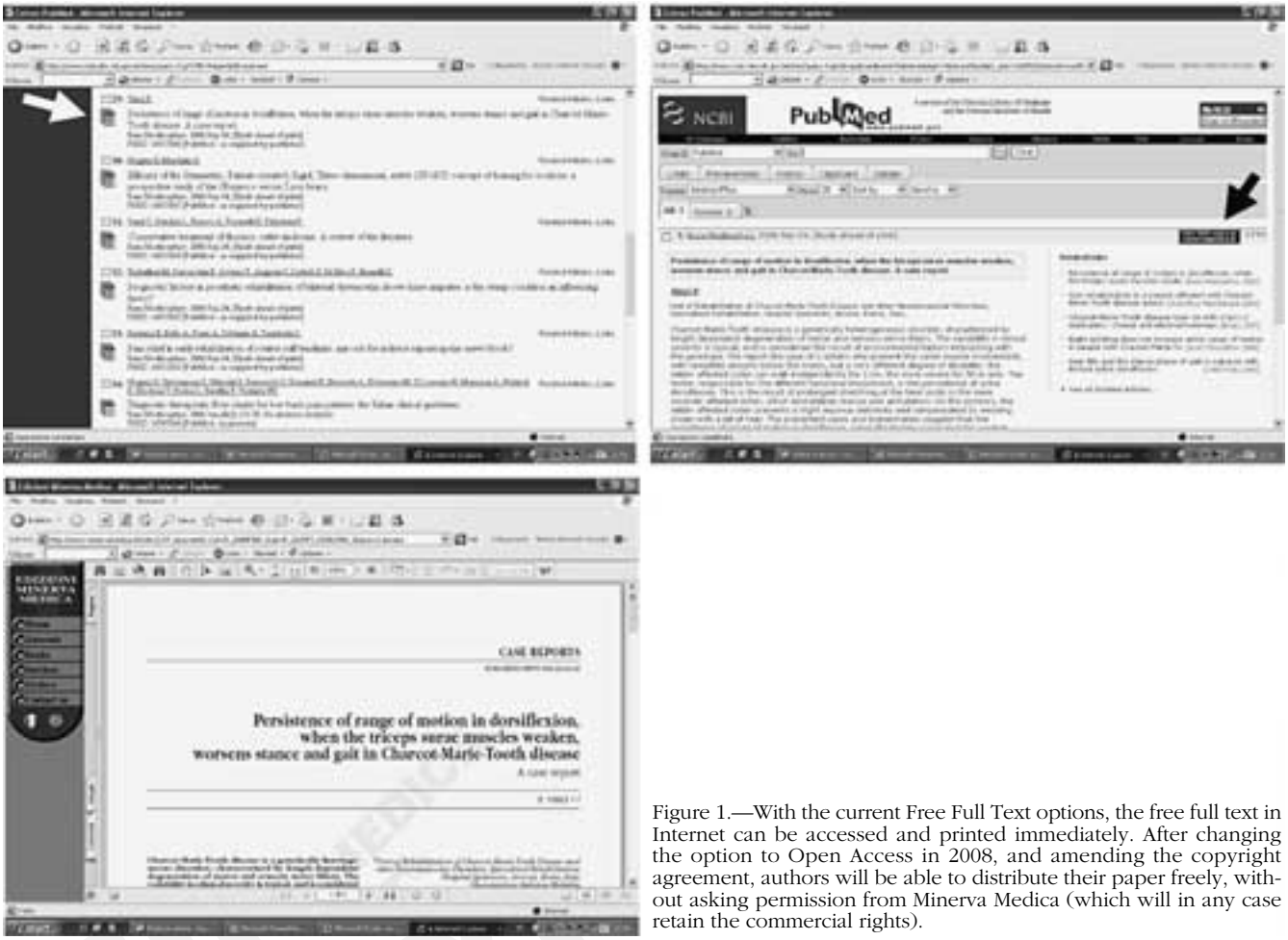

Figure 1.—With the current Free Full Text options, the free full text in Internet can be accessed and printed immediately. After changing the option to Open Access in 2008, and amending the copyright agreement, authors will be able to distribute their paper freely, without asking permission from Minerva Medica (which will in any case retain the commercial rights).

the full text. Theeffect tends to multiplicate. So it is no surprise that wise authors today prefer OA journals, even if this usually means to pay to publish.[1] Today, the FFT option requires asking permission for these options from the Editor, Minerva Medica. We have decided to grant unlimited permission, which will be automatic in 2008, when the electronic edition changes over to OA.

Advantages for the journal

Journals who changed from the print edition to OA increased their impact factor;[1] and this a chief aim of most journals. In fact, the publishing world rotates around readership, and the impact factor is simply one way to measure it. Moreover, OA attracts authors, and this allow journals to increase the quality of their papers through a better selection of accepted material. In turn, readers receive more interesting papers, and this again increases a journal's standing. When properly done, this winning circlecan provide advantages all around. Nevertheless, some problems for journals and editors remain,[1] which is why not all have embraced OA, and why we, too, have been cautious to go through to OA by way of FFT.

Advantages for research and clinical rehabilitation

It is not necessary to elaborate on this point, it is clear how much research can be increased by easy reading of papers from all over the world, from other researchers who have already dealt with the same

TABLE I.—*The eight open access journals of possible interest for clinical rehabilitation. Searches using the key words listed in column 1 retrieved 11 journals. None is of general rehabilitation interest; of those that could be relevant, 1 is listed in Medline/PubMed, and 1 only in PubMed.*

Key word	Relevant titles	Language	Publisher	PubMed/Medline	Web Site
Rehabilitation (6)	Journal of NeuroEngineering and Rehabilitation	English	BioMed Central	PubMed	www.jneuroengrehab.com
	Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development	English	Department of Veteran Affairs, USA	Medline/ PubMed	www.vard.org/jour
	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional de la AGPTO	Spanish	APGTO	No	www.revistatog.com
Physiotherapy (1)	New Zealand Journal of Physiotherapy	English	New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists	No	www.nzsp.org.nz/index02/Publications
Physical Therapy (4)	Journal of Physical Therapy Science	English	Society of Physical Therapy Science	No	www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/jpts/-char/en
	Journal of the Japanese Physical Therapy Association	English	Japanese Physical Therapy Association	No	www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/jjpta
	Revista Brasileira de Fisioterapia	Portuguese, English	Associação Brasileira de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação em Fisioterapia	No	www.scielo.br/scielo.php/script_sci_serial/pid_1413-3555/lng_en/nrm_iso
	Rigakuryoho Kagaku	Japanese	The Society of Physical Therapy Science	No	www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/rika

problems that others before have handled. This is even more true for clinicians, who can easily obtain the information they need when they need it. In fact, while researchers can find printed papers through the services they receive because of their work, clinicians are not so fortunate: this is the revolution that OA is starting. Unsurprisingly, major USA and UK research and health agencies require the researchers who receive funds through them to publish in OA journals![1]

Conclusions

We are embarcking on a new venture here at Europa Medicophysica. The Copyright statements [4] will be amended in accordance with the situation of converting from FFT to OA. A specific search in the Directory of OA Journals (DOAJ) this March,[5] turned up 8 journals that we found, in a way or another, part of the complex world of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (Table I). Moreover, a free search retrieved several other journals of some interest (Advances in Clinical Neurosciences and Rehabilitation and Revista Mexicana de Medicina Física e Rehabilitación). Presumably, there could be others but only one was of general rehabilitation interest, another one is indexed by PubMed/Medline/Index Medicus, and another only by PubMed but not Medline/Index Medicus. We feel this places greater responsibility on our efforts. For it will not take long before other journals will follow suit. Several have already tried, but the problems we, together with Minerva Medica, are facing now, most likely discouraged them. We are sure that OA is and will be another important step forward for our journal, and we believe that it better serve the needs of our readers and authors.

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4. SPARC Author Addendum [http://www.arl.org/sparc/author/addendum.html]
5. DOAJ - Directory of Open Access Journals [http://www.doaj.org/]

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