

BJPsych Open: celebrating 10 years of publishing excellence: a decade in review

Kenneth R. Kaufman

Summary

In celebrating the 10th anniversary of *BJPsych Open*, this editorial review serves as a personal reflection and an overview of the birth, growth, expansion and excellence of the Journal as well as an introduction to the *BJPsych Open* 10th Anniversary Thematic Series. Specific emphasis is placed on changes and advances in productivity, the editorial board, publishing, thematic series, topical articles and focus on ethics. Further, articles of importance to our stakeholders are noted (top cited/downloaded, highlighted articles, articles of the month). The remit and vision for *BJPsych Open* remains unchanged: a general psychiatric journal with high-quality, methodologically rigorous and relevant publications, with relevance to the advancement of clinical care, patient outcomes, the scientific literature, research and policy. The Journal's continued quality, growth and international recognition speak to its place in scientific literature, to the RCPsych mission to disseminate knowledge and to its bright future. As Editor-in-Chief, I note the debt of gratitude owed to an

exemplary multidisciplinary team and the honour and privilege of serving in this role.

Keywords

BJPsych Open anniversary; academic psychiatry; publishing and productivity; methodological rigour and quality; thematic series; metrics; remit, vision and future; editorial board; reviews/research articles/editorials/commentaries; ethics.

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A personal reflection

When asked to write an editorial review celebrating the 10th anniversary of *BJPsych Open* publishing (June 2015 through June 2025), I reflected on what *BJPsych Open* is. To many, and even perhaps even myself when I was first asked to be a founding Deputy Editor, it is simply a general psychiatric journal. Over time the mission statement was honed to reflect what I feel best characterises the Journal – ‘a general psychiatric journal with high-quality, methodologically rigorous and relevant publications, with relevance to the advancement of clinical care, patient outcomes, the scientific literature, research and policy’.¹

Yet, in stating this, and reflecting on the past 10 years, I realise that *BJPsych Open* is much more than a journal; it is a family consisting of authors, reviewers, editorial board members (EBMs), editorial office staff and publication staff. Professor Kamaldeep Bhui was the original Editor-in-Chief (EIC), and during the inception of the Journal he commented on two key issues: (a) the *British Journal of Psychiatry* as a print journal was unable to accept and publish many quality articles due to page limitations; (b) cascading appropriate unaccepted submissions to a high-quality open access journal would permit publication of many of these and by so doing would be a service to The College, the College membership and to the broader scientific community.^{2,3}

I recall our conversation at the RCPsych–American Psychiatric Association reception in May of 2014 when Professor Bhui addressed his desire for this new journal and my response that it would be important to have Deputy Editors from other parts of the world to ensure that this new venture would be perceived as a global journal. Such advice was heeded and Professor Gin Malhi from Australia and I were appointed Deputy Editors.

I was honoured and humbled by Professor Bhui and The College when promoted to EIC. During the past decade and specifically the past 7+ years of my tenure, I have penned several

editorials addressing my feelings regarding both being EIC and the evolution of *BJPsych Open*. Consider some of those words selected – ‘new’, ‘powerful’, ‘transition’, ‘opportunity’, ‘challenge’, ‘vision’, ‘accomplishments’, ‘trajectory’, ‘passion’, ‘growth’, ‘quality’, ‘egalitarian’ and ‘accessible’.^{1–4} All these words still apply, with the key word being ‘passion’. With passion I can face the challenges associated with being EIC, maintain standards and ensure a vision of growth and excellence. I similarly consider the passion needed to be a researcher, academic clinician, EBM and reviewer and am grateful that a decade since its launch, the *BJPsych Open* family remains so passionate.

Key changes and advances in productivity, editorial board, publishing, thematic series, topical articles and focus on ethics

BJPsych Open has witnessed multiple changes during this past decade, most of these since I was appointed EIC in the autumn of 2017. These changes, advances, key publications and the numbers representing a decade in publishing are briefly outlined below and in associated figure/tables. As will be noted, key themes have been and continue to be quality, diversity and international presence.

Consider the significant and sustained growth in total submissions and publications, with reduction in cascaded submissions, such that *BJPsych Open*, though an integral part of the Cambridge University Press (CUP)–RCPsych portfolio, can now function independently (Fig. 1). Consider that for volumes 1–3, 146 articles were published compared with 834 articles published in volumes 7–10. In fact, from the first issue in June 2015 through to the 10th anniversary issue in 2025, total publications were >1390 articles and >10 300 pages (Table 1). These submissions and publications are consistent with the College focus on dissemination of knowledge, with a global outreach for submitting corresponding

BJPsych Open cascaded versus direct submission: 2018–2025

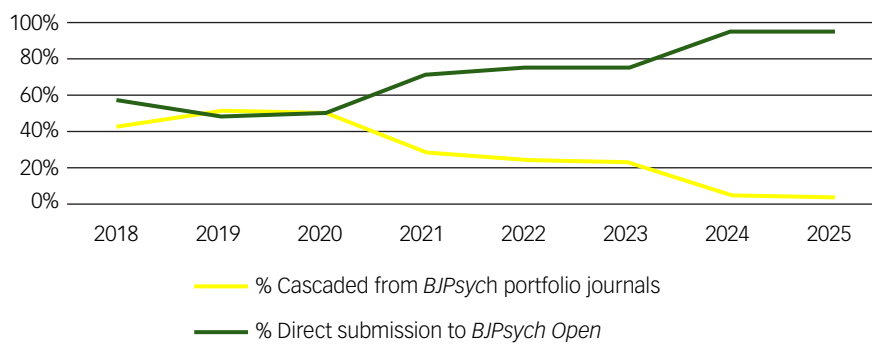


Fig. 1 Cascaded articles versus direct submissions with development of *BJPsych Open* independence.

Volume	Year	Papers ^a	Pages
1	2015	32	184
2	2016	67	416
3	2017	47	308
4	2018	76	513
5	2019	95	683
6	2020	138	970
7	2021	208	1482
8	2022	199	1567
9	2023	211	1666
10	2024	216	1700
11	2025 (to 31 May)	104	838
Total		1393	10 327

a. Articles only – corrigenda, errata, addenda, retraction notices and reviewer lists not included.

authors represent 86 countries, with total authorship of >7620 from 92 countries. Further, the reviewer base has similar country numbers.

BJPsych Open is an international journal with an international presence, and it is important that this is reflected in the editorial board composition. A key strength of this Journal has been the continuing growth of a high-quality, diverse and gender-balanced editorial board including the addition of a statistical panel. The initial board consisted of 7 EBMs, which grew to 38 by 2019³ and today includes 100 EBMs (including handling editors, non-handling editors and statistical panel) from 24 countries. Since EBMs are clinical academicians and/or researchers with multiple other responsibilities, as EIC I have focused on flexible responsibilities to minimise turnover while recognising that board membership turnover is inevitable, with some EBMs leaving and later returning to the board. During the past decade there has been a total of 147 EBMs from 30 countries (Table 2) and 6 continents, of whom >49.6% have been female. Thus, the board has maintained

both geographical diversity and gender equity while still being a meritocracy. Further, the board also includes digital editors for videos and podcasts, which are now associated with the thematic series described below.

As Deputy Editor for the first three volumes of *BJPsych Open* and now EIC, I have been and continue to be committed to egalitarian publications, as indicated by my insistence on a low article processing charge (APC) when the Journal was first published by The College (volumes 1–3) and my creation and funding of the Academic Freedom Fund, which served to discount the APC for those authors without grants. Further, after the publication partnership with CUP from Volume 4 onwards, I was granted a specific number of articles in addition to editorials for which the APC would be totally waived.

BJPsych Open has become a presence in the changing landscape of publishing. At its inception, Plan S was not on the horizon. Open access journals were in their formative years. *BJPsych Open* was part of a quiet revolution in publishing permitting democratisation of scientific knowledge, which over the past decade has led to ever increasing quality and methodological rigour in publications in the Journal, with associated international recognition.^{2,5,6,7} Now Plan S, ‘which requires that from 2021 scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants must be published in compliant Open Access journals or platforms’, continues to grow and controls the future of publications with 81% of cOAlition S funded research open access, though in a global context only 60% of all articles are open access.⁸ CUP, through an ever growing number of transformative agreements and specific waivers, including initiatives for lower- and middle-income countries, ensures that all papers worthy of publication are published without cost to authors.

In addition to publishing standard article types (papers, reviews, short reports, case reports, protocols, editorials and commentaries), this EIC introduced thematic series with associated collections to ensure that the Journal provides an

USA	UK	Belgium	Pakistan	Australia
Canada	Ireland	Spain	India	New Zealand
Brazil	Norway	Italy	Poland	Singapore
	Sweden	Switzerland	Israel	Taiwan
Ethiopia	Denmark	Austria	UAE	Hong Kong
Zimbabwe	Netherlands	Germany	Qatar	
South Africa	France			

30 countries from six continents

in-depth focus on a broad range of topics. Each series is led by a small group of handling editors. Series published to date include: Emerald Series^{9,10} (Graham Thornicroft); Cognition in Mood Disorders¹¹ (Allan Young, Richard Porter, Katie Douglas); COVID-19, Healthcare and Healthcarers¹² (Richard Williams, Kenneth Kaufman, Esther Murray); Refugee and Asylum Mental Health¹³ (Cornelius Katona, Derrick Silove, Kenneth Kaufman, Pieter Ventevogel); Biomarkers of Dissociation¹⁴ (Antje (aka Simone) Reinders, Allan Young, Dick Veltman, Kenneth Kaufman); and Neuropsychiatry: A New View of an Old Paradigm¹⁵ (Marco Mula, Niruj Agrawal, Jay Salpekar, Kenneth Kaufman). Thematic series currently nearing completion or in progress include: Human Rights-Based Mental Healthcare: New Developments (Helen Herrman, Paul Appelbaum, Silvana Galderisi, Norman Sartorius); Psychosocial and Mental Health Impacts of Terrorism and Collective Violence (Richard Williams, Caroline Bell, Kenneth Kaufman); Immune Dysfunction in Mental Healthcare (Ishrat Husain, Becci Strawbridge, Allan Young); Non-suicidal Self Injury in Children and Adolescents (Kathryn Cullen, Ted Petti); Mental Health Economics (Judit Simon, Apostolos Tsiachristas, Julia Ruiz Pozuelo, Henry Cutler, Kenneth Kaufman). Though there are several further thematic series in planning stages, a key one is the *BJPsych Open* Tenth Anniversary Thematic Series (Kenneth Kaufman, Kam Bhui), which through a series of short narrative reviews, editorials and commentaries will showcase what *BJPsych Open* has accomplished during this past decade while focusing on important topics for the future. This editorial serves as an introduction to this Anniversary Thematic Series.

Beyond standard editorials and commentaries, this EIC pursued an increased focus on topical and timely editorials, commentaries and papers impacting mental healthcare, policy, cost analysis, staff well-being, secondary stressors, burnout, stigma, future research and funding, including: world psychiatric response to the COVID-19 pandemic;¹⁶ mental health responses in countries hosting refugees from Ukraine;¹³ promoting human rights in mental healthcare and specifically for assessing psychiatric intervention for children and young people;^{17,18} extremism, racism and riots: exploring the political, social and cultural determinants of poor mental health;¹⁹ breaking barriers in the career development of women in academic psychiatry;²⁰ refugee mental health research: challenges and policy implications;²¹ inflammation as a treatment target in mood disorders;²² cost analysis of a first-episode psychosis intervention programme;²³ learning lessons for recovery of healthcare professionals during and after COVID-19;²⁴ burnout in mental health services;²⁵ effects of mental health stigma and double stigma (associated with combined psychiatric and medical or neurologic disorders) on help-seeking behaviours, treatment outcomes/adherence, and family-perceived stigma.²⁶⁻³⁰

Paramount to ensuring the high quality of *BJPsych Open* is methodological rigour with research integrity and publication ethics. In addition, *BJPsych Open* focuses on ethical themes in clinical care. To this end a series of papers and editorials have been published during the past decade addressing consent,³¹ retraction versus corrigendum,³² impact of predicting major mental illness,³³ capacity-based mental health law,³⁴ compulsory treatment and autonomy³⁵⁻³⁷ and assisted suicide.^{38,39}

Articles of importance to our stakeholders

BJPsych Open as a general psychiatric journal has a mission – to make our stakeholders (the College membership as well as non-members in a global context, academic clinicians, researchers, funding agencies and policymakers) think, to broaden their

Table 3 *BJPsych Open* growth in impact factor, citations and full-text downloads

Year	Impact factor ^a	Citations ^a	Full-text downloads ^b
2018	n.a.	364	46 043
2019	2.286	714	98 939
2020	3.209	1157	193 134
2021	5.165	2252	619 681
2022	5.4	2901	679 120
2023	3.9	3004	790 332
2024	n.a.	3816 ^c	1 062 077
2025	n.a.	1334 ^c	454 131
Total (2018–30 April 2025)		15 542	3 943 457

n.a., not applicable.
a. Data from Journal Citation Reports™, unless otherwise noted.
b. Downloads recorded by Cambridge University Press.
c. Data from Web of Science™.

knowledge base, to improve quality of mental healthcare and treatment outcomes, to foster further research and to add guidance towards funding and policy.¹ The Journal also has a responsibility to listen to these same stakeholders as well as authors, reviewers and EBMs to improve the Journal and its content while always focusing on methodological rigour.¹ It is important to publish both quantitative and qualitative studies to better understand the impact of illness, stressors, treatment and treatment outcomes as appreciated by our patients and our healthcare professionals, including cultural themes. In this context, in addition to those articles referenced above, the following sub-sections summarise articles felt to be important ‘by the numbers’ (those with most citations and downloads) as well as additional noteworthy publications. Table 3 summarises *BJPsych Open*’s growth in impact factor, citations and full-text downloads over the past decade. It is important to remember that citations and other metrics may lag significantly behind the year of publication. The current H-Index for *BJPsych Open* is 53 and growing.

Top cited articles with total citations and downloads (statistics through to 31 May 2025)

1. Anxiety, depression, traumatic stress and COVID-19-related anxiety in the UK general population during the COVID-19 pandemic⁴⁰ (455 citations; downloaded >37 400)
2. Case finding and screening clinical utility of the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9 and PHQ-2) for depression in primary care: a diagnostic meta-analysis of 40 studies⁴¹ (247 citations; downloaded >7900)
3. Anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder in refugees resettling in high-income countries: systematic review and meta-analysis⁴² (229 citations; downloaded >17 400)
4. Embodying self-compassion within virtual reality and its effects on patients with depression⁴³ (200 citations; downloaded >21 700)
5. Mental health in UK Biobank – development, implementation and results from an online questionnaire completed by 157 366 participants: a reanalysis⁴⁴ (196 citations; downloaded >14 000)
6. Fear of COVID-19 and its association with mental health-related factors: systematic review and meta-analysis⁴⁵ (139 citations; downloaded >4700)

7. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and initial period of lockdown on the mental health and well-being of adults in the UK⁴⁶ (136 citations; downloaded 14 700)
8. A global needs assessment in times of a global crisis: world psychiatry response to the COVID-19 pandemic¹³ (131 citations; downloaded >14 700)
9. Asian-Pacific perspective on the psychological well-being of healthcare workers during the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic⁴⁷ (119 citations; downloaded >9000)
10. Local availability of green and blue space and prevalence of common mental disorders in the Netherlands⁴⁸ (119 citations; downloaded >7000)
11. Association between suicidal ideation and suicide: meta-analyses of odds ratios, sensitivity, specificity and positive predictive value⁴⁹ (113 citations; downloaded >18 900)
12. Predictors of mental health and academic outcomes in first-year university students: identifying prevention and early-intervention targets⁵⁰ (111 citations; downloaded >21 300)
13. Prevalence of mental health conditions and relationship with general health in a whole-country population of people with intellectual disabilities compared with the general population⁵¹ (104 citations; downloaded >2800)
14. Patients' experiences of assessment and detention under mental health legislation: systematic review and qualitative meta-synthesis⁵² (102 citations; downloaded >19 400)
15. Light therapy for non-seasonal depression: systematic review and meta-analysis⁵³ (100 citations; downloaded >4900)
16. Anxiety scales used in pregnancy: systematic review⁵⁴ (99 citations; downloaded >10 300)
13. Investigating the impact of music therapy on two in-patient psychiatric wards for people living with dementia: retrospective observational study⁶⁵
14. Effect of daily stressors and collective efficacy on post-traumatic stress symptoms among internally displaced persons in post-war northern Sri Lanka.⁶⁶
15. Lost and found: dynamics of relationship and employment status over time in people with affective and psychotic spectrum disorders⁶⁷

Top 15 downloaded papers from January 2024 through to February 2025

1. A scoping review of social media in child, adolescents and young adults: research findings in depression, anxiety and other clinical challenges⁶⁸ (downloaded >14 100)
2. A systematic review of peer support interventions for student mental health and well-being in higher education⁶⁹ (downloaded >13 200)
3. Refractoriness of aggressive behaviour to pharmacological treatment: cortical thickness analysis in autism spectrum disorder⁷⁰ (downloaded >10 200)
4. Efficacy of low carbohydrate and ketogenic diets in treating mood and anxiety disorders: systematic review and implications for clinical practice⁶⁰ (downloaded >8500)
5. Ketamine for the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders: comprehensive systematic review⁵⁸ (downloaded >8500)
6. Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder diagnoses and prescriptions in UK primary care, 2000–2018: population-based cohort study⁷¹ (downloaded >8000)
7. Creating a hierarchy of mental health stigma: testing the effect of psychiatric diagnosis on stigma²⁷ (downloaded >7700)
8. Predictors of mental health and academic outcomes in first-year university students: identifying prevention and early-intervention targets⁵⁰ (downloaded >7300)
9. Involvement of propranolol in suicides: cross-sectional study using coroner-reported data⁷² (downloaded >6400)
10. Autistic psychiatrists' experiences of recognising themselves and others as autistic: a qualitative study⁷³ (downloaded >5900)
11. Air quality and mental health: evidence, challenges and future directions⁷⁴ (downloaded >5500)
12. Interventions to reduce self-harm on in-patient wards: systematic review⁷⁵ (downloaded >5200)
13. Investigating the impact of financial concerns on symptoms of depression in UK healthcare workers: data from the UK-REACH nationwide cohort study⁷⁶ (downloaded >5100)
14. Afghan mental health and psychosocial well-being: thematic review of four decades of research and interventions⁷⁷ (downloaded >5000)
15. Pilot study of a ketogenic diet in bipolar disorder⁷⁸ (downloaded >4900)

Additional *BJPsych Open* highlighted articles and selected articles of the month

1. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of UK healthcare workers⁵⁵
2. Ethno-cultural disparities in mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional study on the impact of exposure to the virus and COVID-19-related discrimination and stigma on mental health across ethno-cultural groups in Quebec (Canada)⁵⁶
3. Cognitive side-effects of electroconvulsive therapy: what are they, how to monitor them and what to tell patients³⁷
4. Ketamine for the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders: comprehensive systematic review⁵⁸
5. Access to care and frequency of detransition among a cohort discharged by a UK national adult gender identity clinic: retrospective case-note review⁵⁹
6. Double stigma in mental health: epilepsy and mental illness²⁹
7. Efficacy of low carbohydrate and ketogenic diets in treating mood and anxiety disorders: systematic review and implications for clinical practice⁶⁰
8. Mental health responses in countries hosting refugees from Ukraine¹³
9. Effects of psilocybin versus escitalopram on rumination and thought suppression in depression⁶¹
10. Social gradients in the receipt of medication for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in children and young people in Sheffield⁶²
11. People's experiences of distress and psychosocial care following a terrorist attack: interviews with survivors of the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017⁶³
12. Impact of diagnosis on outcomes for compulsory treatment orders in New Zealand⁶⁴

BJPsych Open vision and future

The vision for *BJPsych Open* as described in recent editorials^{1,3,4} remains unchanged:

- (a) no high-quality paper that is methodologically rigorous, original and with clinical relevance is rejected;
- (b) all specialties, subspecialties and associated fields have space;

Table 4 *BJPsych Open* top 15 publication topics over the past decade^{a,b}

Mental health
Depression
Anxiety
Suicide
COVID-19
Schizophrenia/psychosis
Bipolar disorder
PTSD
Digital health and technology
Cognitive impairment and dementia
Neurodevelopmental disorders (including autism/attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder/intellectual disabilities)
Culture
Personality disorders
Stigma
Eating disorders

PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder.

a. Topics based on PubMed and Cambridge University Press.

b. Several topics combined.

- (c) continues to publish a wide range of article types (editorials, research articles, reviews, short papers, exceptional case reports, case series, commentaries, protocols and special communications);
- (d) maintains a strong editorial board with an international base;
- (e) publishes at least one thematic series annually;
- (f) remains an egalitarian journal, economically accessible for all authors who desire to publish;
- (g) continues to grow in submissions, authors, acceptances and reputation;
- (h) is both author-friendly and highly readable.

A change consistent with a focus on continually improving the quality of the Journal's content is a decreased acceptance rate, which is to be expected given increased submissions and increased editorial and editorial office screenings. As noted in prior editorials, there will be no impact factor target, rather the maintenance of an impact factor sufficient to ensure quality submission from all experienced authors (academics and academic clinicians) and associated research groups. Further, the focus on timely editorials and commentaries, thematic series and under-represented topics will continue while maintaining our core publications (Table 4). As EIC, I am proud of our editorial board, but future growth and restructuring will always be necessary to maximise handling-editor expertise and fill any subject-matter gaps, especially as new thematic series are added.

The Journal's future is both a reflection and an expansion of past achievements, structure and quality. To this end the *BJPsych Open* Tenth Anniversary Thematic Series will serve as our mirror, with specific publications not only emphasising prior positive accomplishments but also suggesting new research and areas of import to address. As summarised in this editorial review, with our current growth, quality and international recognition, the future for the Journal is bright, and I look forward to further success over the ensuing decade.

The debt we owe


All journals require the coordinated efforts of a multidisciplinary team. The Journal, its initial possibilities and a decade of growth reflect these efforts from authors, reviewers, EBMs, the editorial office and our publishers. As EIC, I stand on the shoulders of many with special appreciation given to Professor Kam Bui, without whom this Journal would not have been born, the guiding light of

Table 5 *BJPsych Open* prolific authors and reviewers

Authors	Reviewers
Rohit Shankar	Kenneth Kaufman
Allan Young	Eva Petkova
Richard Porter	Steve Kisely
Kenneth Kaufman	Jialiang Li
Graham Thornicroft	Richard Williams
Kamaldeep Bhui	Allan Young
Steve Kisely	Marco Mula
Ann John	Kamaldeep Bhui
Nusrat Husain	Dawn Holmes
Sonia Johnson	Ashok Roy
Crick Lund	Theodore Petti
Rebecca Strawbridge	Javier Escobar
Dan Siskind	Anne Doherty
Charlotte Hanlon	Richard Porter
Oye Gureje	Rebecca Strawbridge

former Head of Publishing Elizabeth Hay, our founding and current Managing Editor, Anna Munks, key EBMs past and present (Allan Young, Eva Petkova, Marco Mula, Becci Strawbridge, Richard Porter, Ioana Cristea, Richard Williams, Nadia Micali, Regi Alexander, Katie Douglas, Gin Malhi, Sophia Frangou), prolific authors and reviewers (Table 5), and our Cambridge University Press publisher, Sarah Maddox.

My passion to serve first as Deputy Editor and now EIC of *BJPsych Open* has been unwavering during the past decade. I remain honoured and privileged to be the EIC of this special Journal, and to work with such an amazing team.

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Data availability

Data supporting the figure and tables may be requested from Anna Munks, *BJPsych Open* Managing Editor and/or Sarah Maddox, Publisher at Cambridge University Press and will be released as appropriate. Some of the data used will be found on the *BJPsych Open*'s website.

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Declaration of interest

K.R.K. is the Editor-in-Chief of *BJPsych Open* and serves on the editorial board of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*. He did not participate in the editorial or decision-making process.

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