



Getting the most out of the ICGP online journals

Patricia Patton explains how and why members should take advantage of the excellent service that is the ICGP A-Z Journals Portal

IN THE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING field of medicine, there is always more to learn.¹ Medical journals provide an excellent source of up-to-date information and help to keep the doctor abreast of new developments.² Currently, we have 50 journal titles, for which the ICGP pays an annual subscription for 15 on behalf of members, accessible via the ICGP A-Z Journals Portal: www.icgp.ie/journals The 15 paid-for journals are: *British Medical Journal*; *British Journal of General Practice*; *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin*; *Education for Primary Care*; *European Journal of General Practice*; *Evidence Based Medicine*; *Family Practice*; *Irish Journal of Medical Science*; *Journal of Palliative Care* (available in print only); *Medical Education (Clinical Teacher, free supplement)*; *Medical Teacher*; *New Zealand Medical Journal*; *Occupational Medicine* (courtesy of LFOM course); *Quality and Safety in Health Care*; and *Quality in Primary Care*

Online access to the ICGP journal collection was launched at the end of 2012, providing ICGP members and GP trainees with the benefit of access to quality information 24/7 from their surgery or home. In June 2014, a new-look for the A-Z Portal was launched.

User commentary

Usage grew rapidly when the journals first went online and has remained constantly high. It is encouraging to see the online journals being used across all areas of the college. Here is what a selection of users had to say:

Dr Tony Cox, ICGP president:

"I am delighted to have access to such a wide range of medical journals, free and online via the ICGP library resources. In my role as GP trainer and MICGP examiner, I have frequently used the online journals, in order to research the evidence base for MICGP exam topics. It has also helped me to find high-quality resource material for my teaching sessions with my trainee.

The journals that I use regularly are the *BMJ*, *Drugs and Therapeutics Bulletin*, *BJGP* and of course *Forum*. In my new role as College president, I am often asked for my opinion and views on a wide range of medical topics and I'm asked to present these views on radio or in the newspapers. The online journal facility has been invaluable to me in researching and preparing for these sessions."

Dr Margaret O'Riordan, ICGP medical director:

"The online journal facility is very useful for keeping up to date with the latest research and developments. I find the *BMJ* and *Drugs and Therapeutics Bulletin* particularly helpful in this regard."

Dr Mary Kearney, CME tutor:

"I find that I have access to so many journals via the ICGP

that there is no need for me to subscribe to any journal. For my work as a tutor, I often search *Forum* for distance learning modules on a particular subject."

Dr Conor McDonnell, occupational medicine course tutor:

"From an occupational medicine perspective, the Oxford journal *Occupational Medicine* is a must-have resource for candidates preparing for the LFOM/MFOM examinations and for practising occupational health physicians. It is an exciting development that this journal is available free online to members and course participants."

Dr Ciara O'Sullivan, GP trainee:

"I find the online journals very useful. It's probably the resource I use the most. I mainly use it to keep up-to-date or if I have difficult cases during the week I'll look up the journals to see what is the evidence behind their management. The main advantage of having the journals online and so accessible is efficiency – I can look up articles anytime."

Dr Rukshan Goonewardena, GP trainee:

"I use the ICGP journals regularly to look up journal articles relevant to training and day-to-day practice. The system does require some getting used to, but it is relatively simple to use once you follow the instructions. The staff at the ICGP library are always happy to help if the user has some difficulty accessing an article. I access the *BMJ* and the *BJGP* most often. Overall, I feel that the ICGP journals service is a great addition to the website and is an invaluable resource for training and practice."

Tips for getting the most out of the online journals

- Read the 'Guide to ICGP A-Z Journals Portal' available from www.icgp.ie/journals
- Read 'Keeping Up-to-date' help sheet available from www.icgp.ie/library
- Sign up to the free 'Table of Contents' (TOC) alerts from your favourite journal(s) and you'll receive an email with the latest issue when available (see help sheet online)
- Use the 'Citation Finder' feature to bring you directly to a specific article (see Guide to ICGP A-Z Journals Portal for explanation on how to use this feature)
- If you can't locate the journal you require, we offer an inter-library loan service.

If you have any feedback or suggestions, please contact the Library at Email: library@icgp.ie

Patricia Patton, ICGP librarian

References

1. John Hopkins Medicine. Available at http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/education/health_professionals.html
2. Hopkins EJ. Keeping up to date in General Practice. *J Coll Gen Pract.* 1962; 5(4): 648-653