

## **Arthritis Research: more than a journal (<http://arthritis-research.com>)**

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We are delighted to welcome you to the first printed issue of *Arthritis Research*, a publication that has already existed on the Internet for the last few months. This fact alone is an indication that we are beginning a new type of publication – one that will have the goal of serving the multidisciplinary research community looking at all aspects of arthritis and related autoimmune diseases.

We would like to outline here the scope of this publication as well as to let you know more about its format and the services that it will provide. It is the innovative combination of both the content and the format of *Arthritis Research* that has made us, and many of our colleagues who have joined this endeavour, excited and confident of its value.

### **Scope**

Our objective is to provide a forum for the presentation and interchange of information from the many disciplines that are actively carrying out research in arthritis. In many areas of the biological sciences, as well as clinical research, new and exciting information is being published, often without obvious relevance to other disciplines. We aim both to identify, comment and review all exciting developments in our field wherever they appear, and to offer a place for the efficient and rapid publication of primary research using all the latest technological advances available. This publication also aims to bring together and define an international community of researchers who share the vision that, by increasing scientific knowledge, we will cure and prevent chronic rheumatic diseases.

### **Format**

The main medium of publication for *Arthritis Research* is the Internet. Our website is already available at <http://arthritis-research.com> and we encourage anyone who has not yet visited the site to take a look. The website contains the complete publication – everything that *Arthritis Research* publishes will be available in its full and definitive form on the Internet. We also publish a print edition of *Arthritis Research*. From 2000, a subscription will be charged for full online access to the *Arthritis Research* website and for the print edition of the journal. Primary research articles will be available online for free (see below). Commentaries, reviews and reports will be available only to paid subscribers.

### **Innovations**

#### **Publishing primary research**

A number of new ideas are included in this publication, and more will appear as *Arthritis Research* grows and develops in response to the needs and requirements of the community of arthritis researchers. Perhaps the most important is our decision [1] to make all primary research articles available free to everyone through the new repository of biomedical research articles organised by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and starting in January 2000 – to be known as PubMed Central [2]. We believe in the value and importance of the goal of making all primary biomedical research available without barriers of entry (ie free to everyone), which the new NIH initiative will help make possible. All primary research articles published in this way will be immediately listed in the PubMed database [3], the most important and widely used bibliographic database. We hope that many of you, like us, will support this important goal and that it will play a part in helping you to choose *Arthritis Research* as the publication through which you will wish to publish your research.

An additional important innovation concerning primary research articles, also developed in conjunction with the NIH's PubMed Central, is the possibility of depositing non-refereed primary research ('preprints') in a special section of *Arthritis Research*. These articles will also be available immediately through PubMed Central. This idea is new and we will be watching carefully how it develops, but many researchers feel it may prove to be an important and useful way of making the results of their research public. Initially, we see two main reasons for making research available in this non-refereed form:

1. It allows information to be made available rapidly, and some scientists may wish to make their research accessible while their article is going through the normal and strict peer-review process operated by both *Arthritis Research* and other journals. This will have the benefit of establishing priority of discoveries as well as making research available to others quickly. Non-refereed research articles will often be published within 48 hours of receipt – after a short internal review to ensure the information is relevant to the community and in an appropriate format.

2. There may be some findings which do not justify a full paper and the full process of peer-review, but which nevertheless should be made public. This may include improvements in techniques and methods, experiences with using equipment, software or technology, unusual and interesting observations, case histories, etc. This type of information often goes unreported at present.

#### Services to the research community

The Internet-based publication of *Arthritis Research* will offer and develop a range of services that we hope will be useful to our community. We will be working closely with our subscribers, research colleagues and the publishers to respond to the needs and possibilities that the new technology provides. From the start we will offer the following services:

1. *Member search*: Each subscriber (unless s/he wishes to be excluded from this service) will provide a short profile of their area of work and special interests which will be available to other subscribers. In this way, members can search and find colleagues working in similar areas or in areas they would like to find more about, and use the facility within the website to contact each other, ask questions and initiate discussions.
2. *Databases*: We will offer access through the *Arthritis Research* website to an enhanced version of PubMed, which allows users to keep their own personal record of searches and to automatically execute special searches in fixed intervals with the results being emailed to the user directly. We also provide a database of meetings, links to other sites relevant to our subject, and other databases that we hope our users will find of interest. We encourage subscribers to tell us what databases they currently find useful and to suggest new databases that we might develop in the site.

We also plan to offer services such as discussion forums, exchange of ideas, jobs and grants information, equipment and software reviews and comments by users. We welcome suggestions from subscribers, and we encourage you to contact us (preferably via Feedback in the website) with your suggestions.

#### Other services

##### *Paper reports*

One of the central services of *Arthritis Research* is to keep subscribers informed of interesting and important developments in all the many different areas of research relevant to our subject. One of the more important ways we plan to achieve this is by creating a team of experienced researchers and clinicians who systematically scan the literature, identify research of interest and rapidly provide paper reports. Each paper report gives a careful summary of the content of the article and an informed comment by the paper reporter.

##### *Web reports*

We will provide a systematic review of the most interesting developments on the web, and we invite subscribers to alert us to any interesting information they find on the web so that it can be shared with others.

#### Conclusion

This is the beginning of a new and exciting period in the presentation and reporting of research developments in biomedical science in general and in all areas related to arthritis research in particular. We see ourselves as the innovators in this new way of publishing. This means we have a lot to learn and much to invent. We believe and hope that this will provide a substantially improved environment for presenting and sharing research findings and learning about all new developments in our rapidly expanding field.

#### References

1. Current Science Group: **Press Release 26 April 1999**. [http://arthritis-research.com/web\\_page.cfm?page=news](http://arthritis-research.com/web_page.cfm?page=news)
2. NIH Press Release 30 August 1999 PubMed Central: **An NIH-Operated Site for Electronic Distribution of Life Sciences Research Reports**. <http://www.nih.gov/welcome/director/pubmedcentral/pubmedcentral.htm>
3. PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/>

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