

Open Access Journals in the Field of Health Science: A Case Study on DOAJ and Open J-Gate*

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to discover the availability of online open access journals in the field of health science. It introduces two major online open access databases, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Open J-Gate, available in the field of health science. The databases archive around 3,373 health science open access journals published by the various international publishers and research institutes. The paper also highlights the importance of the said journals and, through this study, aims to create awareness among the health science professionals, research scholars and academicians.

KEYWORDS: *Open access journals, Health science, DOAJ, Open J-Gate*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of subject-specific scholarly journals, unlike books, has become valuable supplement to the world of dynamic knowledge. The technology and the intellectual openness have made learning even more meaningful and helped enrich the world of knowledge. One such invaluable tool which reflects this fact is *open access journals/databases*. The proliferation of freely accessible open access journals (OAJs), in any field of study, is phenomenal. The OAJs have become excellent source of scientific information which can be accessible without any price tag or any copyright limitations. The growing costs of scholarly journals and pay-based subscription to peer-review journals have kept research institutes and research scholars, of developing countries, in a difficult place. The OAJs come to rescue in such a situation.

*Citation: Hulagabali, S. C. & Hulagabali, R. S. (2012). Open Access Journals in the Field of Health Science: A Case Study on DOAJ and Open J-Gate. In A. Jose, P. A. Gokhale & Hulagabali (Eds), S. C. *Open Access Movement in the Age of Innovation and ICT: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. pp.129-137. ISBN: 978-93-5051-722-2.

The OAJs are available in almost all the branches of knowledge. The present study discovers the open access databases (OADs) in the field of health science. This study documents the OAJs archived in selected OADs viz. Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Open J-Gate. This study, through this paper, aims to help the research scholars and health science professionals to access around 3,373 OAJs in health science.

2. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

2.1. Journal:

- a) "A newspaper or magazine that deals with a particular subject or professional activity" (Oxford Dictionary, 2011).
- b) "Many publications issued at stated intervals, such as magazines, or scholarly academic journals, or the record of the transactions of a society, are often called journals. Although journal is sometimes used as a synonym for "magazine," in academic use, a journal refers to a serious, scholarly publication, most often peer-reviewed. A non-scholarly magazine written for an educated audience about an industry or an area of professional activity is usually called a professional magazine" (AskDefine, 2011).

2. 2. Open Access Journal: Open access journals are scholarly journals that are available to the reader without financial or other barrier other than access to the internet itself.

2. 3. Health Science: "Healthcare/health science is the applied science dealing with the application of science, technology, engineering or mathematics to the delivery of healthcare" (Wikipedia, 2011).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been framed with the vision to help the health science professionals to tap the treasure of full-text journals available in their field.

- a) To discover the availability of online OAJs in field of health science;
- b) to introduce two major online open access databases of journals in the field of health sciences viz. DOAJ and Open J-Gate and
- c) to create awareness about the online OAJs among the students, researchers and health science professionals.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

- a) The present study attempts to find out the availability of online full-text OAJs in the field of health science.

- b) The research study has restricted its scope to the online OAJs archived in DOAJ and Open J-Gate only.
- c) The above *selection of the sample is purposive* as there are many journals available on health science but they are scattered. Considering the time frame, availability of sources of information and possible utility of the study, the journals archived in DOAJ and Open J-Gate have been selected.

5. SIGNIFICANCE

Today's web technology or Internet age has given best tools to the professionals irrespective any field. The professionals can have ample opportunities to use the web applications for knowledge management, decision making and what not. Open access to sources of information like journals, directories and databases has indeed enhanced the value of research and online participation. The study on OAJs helps the academicians understand the utility, trends and availability of the resources in their chosen field.

- a) The online databases of *OAJs help the research scholars*, academicians and health science professionals to tap the scholarly journals with much ease.
- b) The access to, health science, *OAJs, is available with no price tag* or subscription fees or any copyright hurdles. It also enhances the effective use of scholarly journals for any kind of research.
- c) The *OAJs can be accessed anywhere* as the journals are available online.
- d) Moreover, the *OAJs enhance the quality of research* as the new trends and research, in health sciences, can be known easily and incorporated.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is a case study on OAJs comprising the following research design.

6.1. Universe/Population: The universe of online OAJs in the field of health science is very wide. There are many health science OAJs available on web but are scattered as single/independent journal or bunch of journals in the form of databases/archives. In view of the said facts, the research study is undertaken on OAJs available only in DOAJ database and Open J-Gate.

6.2. Sample Size: To assess the availability and utilities of the study, two major OADs, viz. DOAJ and Open J-Gate, have been selected which comprise around 3,373 OAJs in the field of health science. The selection of the above mentioned sample is purposive.

6.3. Sources of Information: The source of information, for this study, is completely based on the primary data available on the official websites of DOAJ and Open J-Gate.

7. CASE STUDY ON DOAJ AND OPEN J-GATE

There are innumerable OAJs available on the web but are scattered. Hence, this research study has specifically selected the above stated databases through which the health sciences OAJs have been traced. It is easy for the research scholars and professionals to access the OAJs at one place. Let us know DOAJ and Open J-Gate in detail.

6. A. DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS (DOAJ)

The aim of the DOAJ is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals thereby promoting their increased usage and impact. The Directory aims to be comprehensive and cover all open access scientific and scholarly journals that use a quality control system to guarantee the content. In short, a one stop shop for users to OAJs. (DOAJ, 2011)

Figure 1: Screenshot of DOAJ's official website: www.doaj.org



7. A.1. Features:

- All scientific and scholarly subjects are covered in this database.
- The types of the sources archived in DOAJ are scientific and scholarly periodicals that publish research or review papers in full-text. The directory accepts academic, government, commercial and non-profit private sources.
- The target group for included journals is primarily researchers.
- It allows any journal in any of the international languages and access to all content is freely available.

7. A.2. Access:

- All content is freely available.
- Registration: Free user registration online is acceptable.

c) Open access without any delay.

7. A.3. DOAJ's Health Science Journals:

There are 730 OAJs under health science category. The DOAJ has provided four broad subjects categorized under health science. The following table shows the various themes listed under sub-domains of health science and number of OAJs against the same.

Table 1: *Subject-wise distribution of health science journals*

A	DENTISTRY	74
B	NURSING	37
C	PUBLIC HEALTH	168
D	MEDICINE (GENERAL)	1136
D.1	Allergy and Immunology	29
D.2	Anesthesiology	14
D.3	Cardiovascular	73
D.4	Dermatology	23
D.5	Gastroenterology	38
D.6	Gynecology and Obstetrics	34
D.7	Internal medicine	270
D.8	Neurology	101
D.9	Oncology	76
D.10	Ophthalmology	26
D.11	Otorhinolaryngology	20
D.12	Pathology	36
D.13	Pediatrics	57
D.14	Pharmacy	77
D.15	Psychiatry	49
D.16	Sports Medicine	20
D.17	Surgery	85
D.18	Therapeutics	81
D.19	Urology	27
	Total	1415

The following figure is a sample entry of one of the journals of health science in the DOAJ database.

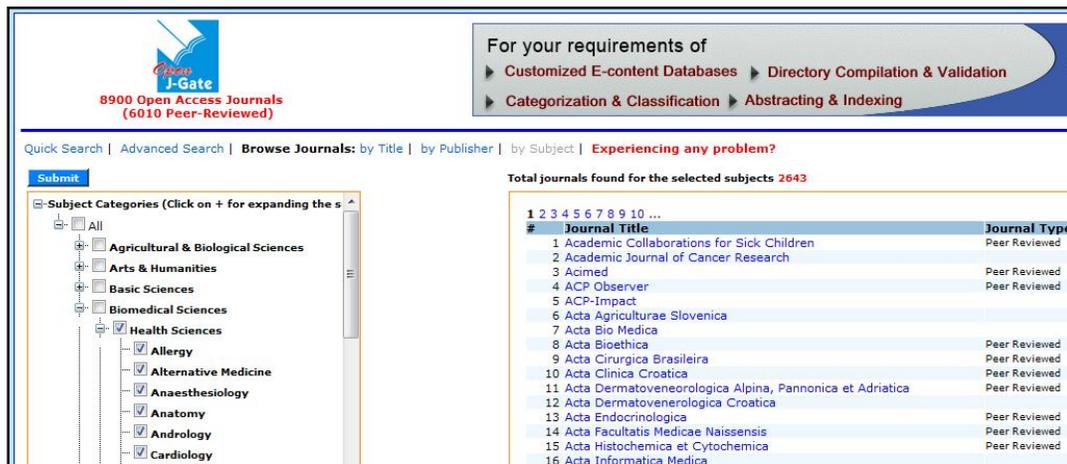
Figure 2: Model entry of a journal in DOAJ

Online Journal of Issues in Nursing	DOAJ Content
ISSN: 10913734	
Subject: Nursing	
Publisher: Kent State University School of Nursing	
Country: United States	
Language: English	
Keywords: nursing, medicine, health science	
Start year: 1996	
Publication fee: No ---	

7. B. OPEN J-GATE:

This is an electronic gateway to global journal-literature in open access domain which was launched in 2006. Open J-Gate is the contribution of Informatics (India) Ltd. to promote open access initiative. Open J-Gate provides seamless access to millions of journal articles available online. Open J-Gate is also a database of journal literature, indexed from 8,900 open access journals, with links to full-text at the publisher sites (Open J-Gate, 2011).

Figure 3: Screenshot of Open J-Gate's official website: www.openj-gate.com



7. B.1. Open J-Gate Features and Benefits:

- Portal with the largest number of e-journals:* Open J-Gate indexes articles from 8,900 academic, research and industry journals. In that 6010 of them are peer-reviewed scholarly journals.
- Links to one million+ open access articles:* This number is growing with 30, 0000+ new articles added every year. Full-text links are regularly validated.

- c) *Constant updating*: The Open J-Gate site is updated every day.
- d) *Well designed journal classification*: All journals are classified in a three-level hierarchical system to provide for better relevancy in search results.
- e) *Table of Content (TOC) Browsing*: Users can browse the TOC of latest issue and the back issues.
- f) *Easy-to-Use search functionalities*: The database allows various search options for the user's convenience. The subscriber can search by Title, Author, Abstract, Author's Address/Institution, and Keywords (Open J-Gate, 2011).

7. B.2. Open J-Gate's Health Science Journals:

The Open J-Gate has categorized health science journals under Biomedical Sciences. There are 2,643 health science journals have been listed. The major subjects- of which available OAJ's are: *Allergy, Alternative Medicine, Anaestheology, Anatomy, Andrology, Cardiology, Cerebrovascular, Clinical Medicine, Dentistry, Dermatology, Diabetes, Embryology, ENT, Family Medicine, Forensic science, Genetics, Hematology, Hepatology, Histology, HIV/AIDS, Nursing, Oncology, Physiology, Physiotherapy, Psychiatry, Public Health, Sports Medicine, Surgery and Veterinary Science.*

8. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the OAJs are available in large number (online) in almost all the disciplines. But the awareness, about such invaluable resources, has to be created among the academicians, professionals and, especially, research scholars. The appreciable trend of OAJ is that most of them are available/archived in the databases like Open J-Gate or DOAJ. This facilitates the user to access the database directly than to access the journals separately. This helps the user to use other allied/related journals too while accessing for the requisite journals. On the other hand, some databases claim that all their archived-journals are *open to access*. But exceptionally some journals are limited to abstract/summary level or keyword level only. The 'exclusive open access databases' must not include such journal which does not allow 'exclusive open access'. Moreover, the very open access trend is breaking all economic barriers of commercial or pay-based access and thus revolutionizing the access to documented intellectual-expression in the form of open access journals.

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