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Computational Semantics in Clinical Text Supplement

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As scientists, we create and disseminate knowledge. Resources from various benefactors open the doors of discovery. Likewise, we are obliged to disseminate our findings where they will have an impact. We want our thoughts and words to be heard. Yet, neither creation nor dissemination of newfound knowledge is easy. Some facts are more stubborn than others; prying them loose and describing them takes effort and discipline.

In the 1980's some of the challenges to dissemination were reduced when open-access journals emerged. While the hallowed peer-review process remained, these journals provided access to knowledge without financial, legal or technical constraints to the reader. They provided an innovative venue to disseminate findings by using the world wide web as the main source of distribution.¹ The impact of these journals is growing. In 2000 there were 740 open-access journals that produced 19,500 articles. In 2009, this grew to 4769 journals and 191,850 articles; this represents 20% of scholarly publications.² In the open access world, the journal increasingly assumes the distribution role formerly undertaken by institutional libraries, while maintaining essential editorial quality.

Intuitively, the increased accessibility of open access journals ought to lead to a greater number of citations. Numerous studies have verified this.³ Multiple studies have shown that articles published in an open access journal are referenced more frequently than those published elsewhere.^{3,4} I acknowledge that other factors influence whether a paper is cited aside from its publication in an open access journal: it must be widely accessible through the channels that researchers employ and—at the risk of making a trite argument—the paper must have sufficient merit to justify being cited.

All of this supports the emerging importance of *Biomedical Informatics Insights* as a vehicle for disseminating scientific findings. In this special issue we present a second series of conference proceedings. The first, Sentiment Analysis of Suicide Notes: A Shared Task,⁵ produced over 20 manuscripts and was published soon after the conference. This issue reviews the scientific productivity of the first Computational Semantics in Clinical Text conference. This conference, chaired by Drs. Stephen Wu, Nigam Shah, and Kevin Bretonnel Cohen is described elsewhere, but it is an honor for *Biomedical Informatics Insights* to be the repository of the proceedings.

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