

*Editorial*

The European Journal of Adapted Physical Activity (EUJAPA) on its 16th volume – Editor-in-Chief farewell and welcome

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Introduction

Research underpins societal progress by providing a foundation of knowledge and evidence-based understanding, a valuable support to decision-making in healthcare and education, that contributes to enhancing the welfare of society. It is thus of importance that research findings are of high quality, but also accessible to all so that nobody is excluded from those benefits. Publishing in academic journals is therefore a core business for many researchers. Recent calls within the research community have asked for making research open and accessible to all (Wilsdon et al., 2015). This can largely mean reducing the financial burden on authors, readers and administrators, but it can also mean making science more transparent. UNESCO promotes making science more accessible, inclusive and equitable for the benefit of all, and has launched a 'Recommendation on Open Science' that was adopted by the 41st session of UNESCO General Conference in November 2021 (UNESCO, 2021).

Over the last few years, the European Journal of Adapted Physical Activity (EUJAPA) has embraced many changes led by the Open Science movement to allow authors to submit their papers for publication without any fees, whether it is maintenance/submission fees, processing fees, or for profit. EUJAPA is also not hidden behind a paywall, whereby subscribers need to pay a fee to read publications. This means that EUJAPA falls in the category of DIAMOND (or platinum) open-access (OA) journals, a very equitable and transparent community-led model of publishing where there is no relation between paper acceptance and financial earnings, which allows a pure focus on quality and community benefits. However, one of the challenges for DIAMOND OA journals is their limited resources, both financially and time-wise. To be able to sustain this model of publishing that has many benefits related to transparency, integrity and inclusivity, larger investments of editorial teams as well as of authors are required. The DIAMOND OA model of EUJAPA thus relies strongly on their active EUFAPA community and we are very thankful for the commitment of EUFAPA members and their availability for thorough reviewing. EUJAPA has chosen for a double-blind peer-review model, with a strong focus on quality and the intention to help authors improve the scientific quality, where reviewers advise editors on the decision to publish or not.

In 2018, EUJAPA welcomed a new editorial team composed of Professor Pauli Rintala and Dr Kwok Ng from Finland. Between 2018 and the end of 2022, there were 373 papers submitted for publication in EUJAPA. Of these, 59 papers have been published. Even though Professor Rintala retired in 2021, he diligently continued his role as Editor-in-Chief for EUJAPA for over a year. Now in 2023, after 5 years at the helm of editor-in-chief, he was delighted to pass the baton to Professor Florentina Hettinga from Northumbria University, England. In this editorial, both editors provide past and future remarks for the journal.

Remarks from outgoing Editor Emeritus Professor Pauli Rintala

With the 16th volume underway, EUJAPA is now a teenager in full development towards maturity. I have had the privilege of editing the journal since 2018 and have learned

many different things about the publication process. However, many similar things that I raised in my editorial (Rintala, 2018) still exist and challenge us. In addition, new questions have arisen and those include: Why do authors not follow the instructions given by the journal such as the given template, required APA 7th edition format, or attach a checklist from the Equator Network? Complying with those guidelines would alleviate the editorial work at our end and at the same time speed up the publication process, which would contribute to enhance the quality of the journal.

During the past five years, there have been several developments that are worth mentioning. First, the new ACTAVIA journal platform was made available to us when I started in 2018, and has been working well. Secondly, as an open-access journal, we are at the moment indexed in Scopus, ERIHPLUS, DOAJ and Publication Forum. Thirdly, we have changed our two issue volumes to continual volumes, having published 13 papers and one Book of Abstracts in 2022. This way we are more flexible with the number of papers published in one year which always depends on the supply and the quality and quantity of manuscripts submitted to us.

There are still many things that I would like to see happening in the future EUJAPA development. I would like to see more professionals on the editorial board who could help the load of section editors. We are also looking for enthusiastic, and scholarly experienced section editors to join the workforce. Moreover, one important thing is to try to speed up the reviewing processing time which is the combination of the editorial staff and reviewers efforts, a big challenge with our DIAMOND OA model.

To sum up, I have been very fortunate to have this opportunity to serve as the editor-in-chief for these past years and would like to thank the assistant editor, Dr. Kwok Ng, for his commitment to improving the journal's quality and helping me to become a better editor. Moreover, I want to thank all the section editors, Aija Klavina, Marit Sørensen, Jolanta Marszalek and Debbie van Biesen for their service to the journal, not to forget the editorial board members. Lastly, thanks to those reviewers who gave their time to make the published papers better for the common good in Adapted Physical Activity. None of this work is needed unless we receive submissions from colleagues all over the world.

Remarks from incoming Editor Professor Florentina Hettinga

It is an exciting time to join EUJAPA as Editor in Chief. EUJAPA, a community-led journal with inclusivity at its heart, that is well ahead of its time offering the now heavily promoted and inclusive DIAMOND OA way of publishing. A publishing model that provides equitable access, with no costs associated for either authors or readers, that does not exclude anyone from reading or publishing based on costs. A publishing model that allows authors to keep their copyright (CC BY licence) and contributes thereby to Coalition S's rights retention strategy (cOAlition S, 2020). A publishing model that is a not-for-profit model, in which acceptance of a paper is unrelated to financial gains, which provides room to focus on research quality and rigour, research integrity, and equity and inclusivity, instead of pure growth and irresponsible turnaround speed. However, it is also a publishing model with a lot of challenges, without infra-structure and resources of a big publisher to support us, and requires a large commitment from the EUFAPA community to be involved for thorough review and editing, as well as for authors to commit to working with our templates to facilitate processing.

Voluntary efforts and commitment of the EUJAPA community are driving this journal and are also key to its further development. We need committed individuals who want to advance the area of adapted physical activity, and value research quality, integrity and inclusivity to strengthen our editorial board and will send out an Expression of Interest in due course, where we hope to attract expert researchers globally. We aim to further

streamline our templates and infrastructure in the longer term, following global initiatives such as DIAMAS, who are currently exploring how to develop tools, policies and strategies to support DIAMOND OA Journals, where we have provided our input. We will remain vigilant to join global initiatives supporting and strengthening DIAMOND OA models, which could lead to further advancing and speeding up the editorial process. We would also commit to responsible research by becoming a signatory of DORA, the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, supporting the developing and promoting of best practice in the assessment of researchers and scholarly research.

Lastly, I would like to ask you, EUJAPA community, for your input. Based on all 84 papers listed in Scopus that have been published in EUJAPA since indexing in Scopus in 2015, I have used Vosviewer to create a visual network map (Figure 1), based on co-occurrence of keywords. This map provides a nice illustration of what the key topics and themes within EUJAPA have been, and what our identity as a journal looks like. Keywords clearly appearing are health, disability, (adapted) physical activity, inclusion, Paralympics, and intellectual disability, areas in which we have received excellent publications. I would like to invite you all, researchers as well as practitioners in adapted physical activity, to now also think about the future, and discuss with us as editorial board what you think current and future key topics are, or should be, in the field of adapted physical activity. Do not hesitate to get in touch to express any thoughts and ideas, and we will also explore how we can best reach out to discuss further, for example on future EUCAPA conferences.

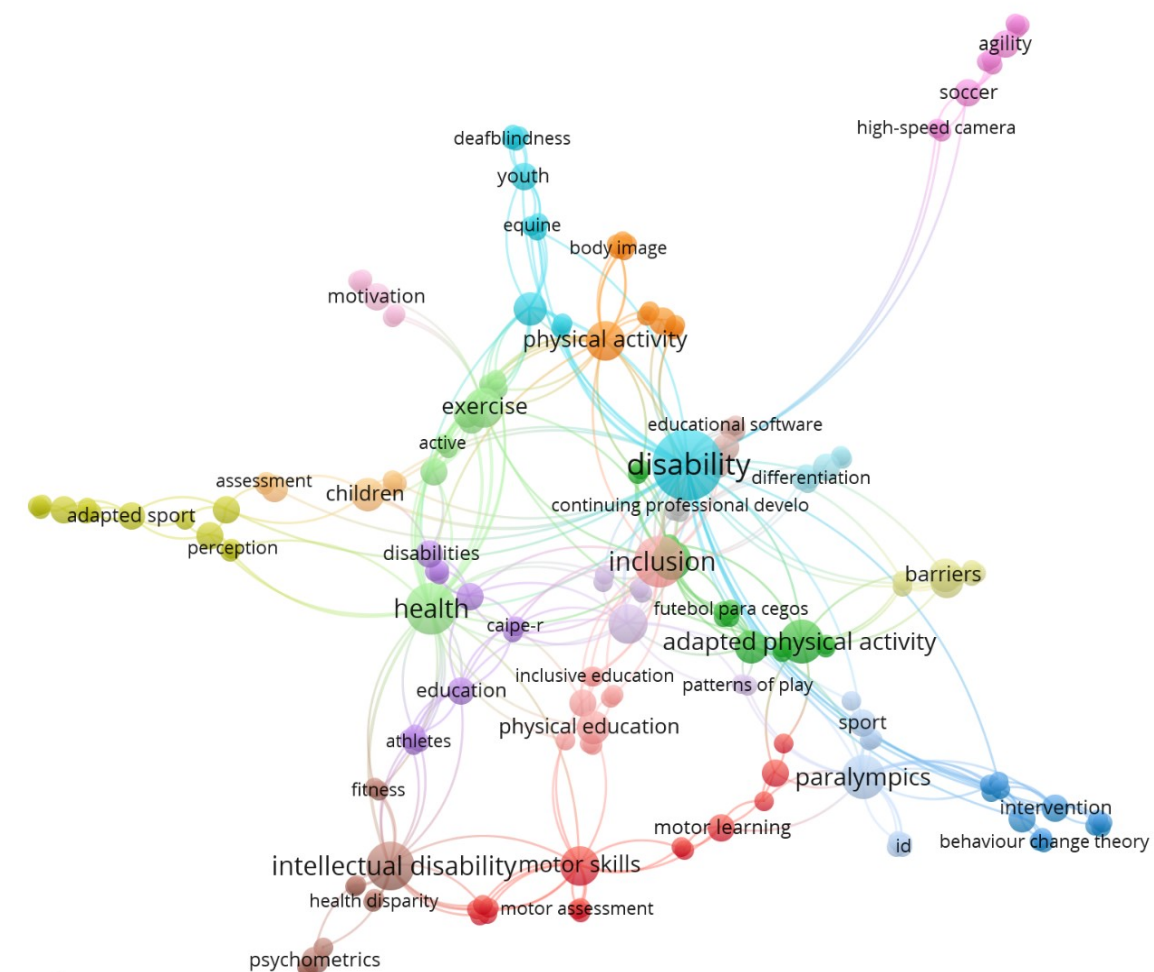


Figure 1. Interconnections between keywords in EUJAPA 2015-2023

Conclusions

The EUJAPA journal has grown in popularity in the last few years under the leadership of Professor Pauli Rintala. In addition to the official journal of the European Federation of Adapted Physical Activity, the ethos of the journal is within the framework of Diamond OA journals, meaning that authors do not need to pay to submit, to publish, nor do readers need to pay to read content. This opportunity has been well used by many people from the APA community, although it has also meant the authors have had to learn the ropes of formatting and making their work transparent. The next steps for this journal are important for growing quality scholarship with the aim to keep publications of science available immediately, accessible, and the rights to access are not restricted. Inclusivity, quality and integrity will be at the heart of the journal's strategy. Goals for the future are to expand the editorial board via an expression of interest, to optimise templates and guidance we have available to authors to facilitate both submission and processing, and develop and communicate our policies more clearly, supported by annual reporting on key aspects of the journal such as diversity.

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