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An open-access journal for health data linkage research?

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The need

- Health research using linked data presents many methodological and technical challenges, for example:
 - developing definitions for key indicators and concepts
 - selecting appropriate denominators
 - assessing the quality of routinely collected data and their linkages
 - addressing biases caused by unlinked records
 - applicability of traditional statistical techniques to very large data sets.

The need

- We need to share glossaries, data dictionaries, metadata, computer code
- Opportunities to publish this work in peer-reviewed journals is limited
- This information is scattered and hard to find

Possible solutions

- New open access journal
 - Commercial publisher
 - BioMed Central
 - Self-published
 - Open Journal Systems
- Supplement(s) to existing journals

BioMed Central: costs

- Hosts 127 independent journals
- Starting a new independent journal is free of charge
- No subscription charges for users
- Article-processing charge for each accepted article:
 - currently GBP800 (approximately US\$1610/ €1185)
 - no charge for authors employed by institutional members of BioMed Central
 - waived for authors who lack funds
- Journals may subsidise article-processing charges
- Editor(s)-in-Chief are paid a stipend
- Additional administrative expenses negotiable

BioMed Central: workload

- BioMed Central provides tools:
 - online manuscript submission system
 - tool to invite peer-reviewers for manuscripts
 - online article-production system
- BioMed Central does not provide copyediting services
- Prospective editors must be willing to:
 - recruit an active Editorial Board
 - organise the peer-review system
 - pursue research manuscripts
 - invite/commission commentaries, reviews and other types of articles
 - help to actively market the journal

Open Journal Systems

- Journal management and publishing system developed by the Public Knowledge Project
 - based at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia
- Open source software freely available to journals worldwide
 - installed locally and locally controlled
 - editors configure requirements, sections, review process, etc
 - online submission and management of all content
 - subscription module with delayed open access options
 - email notification and commenting ability for readers
 - payments module for accepting fees
- Used by more than 800 journals, many in the developing world
- Example: *Health and Human Rights*
<http://www.hhrjournal.org/index.php/hhr>

Supplement(s) to existing journals

- Sponsors/guest editors usually cover the article processing fees
- Many possible journals
 - Population Health Metrics (IF 1.54)
 - all aspects of the measurement of health at the population level
 - <http://www.pophealthmetrics.com/>
 - BMC Health Services Research (IF 1.36)
 - all aspects of health services research
 - <http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmchealthservres/>

For discussion

- Is there really a need?
- Which model(s) should be pursued?
- Who is willing to be involved?