

## CASE ANALYSIS

# Exploration of strategies for thematic publishing in medical journals

Liying Zhao, Junting Wang\*

Publishing House of Journals and Audiovisual of Practical Medicine, Journal Center of China Medical University, Shenyang 110001, Liaoning Province, China

## ABSTRACT

Thematic publishing is a major form of implementing the will of the state and serving the national development strategy. It is the mission and responsibility of medical journals to do a solid job in promoting thematic publishing. In order to promote the development of health care, the *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* has been deeply engaged in creating quality products about thematic publishing. The article "History, Present Status and Future Developmental Trend of Oral Health Science Integrated Humanity in China—By Review of One Century's Advances in Dental Prevention at the Nationwide Basis" was awarded as an excellent achievement in thematic publishing. The article summarizes the experience of thematic publishing in the *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* and analyzes it in terms of clarifying the direction of thematic publishing, deepening the content of thematic publishing, and expanding the publicity of thematic publishing, providing a reference for medical journals to improve the quality and effectiveness of thematic publishing.

**Key words:** thematic publishing, medical journals, health, oral preventive medicine

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of thematic publishing originated from the thematic publishing project proposed by the former State Press and Publication Administration in 2003. Since then, thematic publishing has played an irreplaceable role in guiding public opinion and dispelling doubts. Comprehensively promoting the construction of healthy China is one of the main contents of the 14th Five-Year-Plan.<sup>[1]</sup> It is the mission and responsibility of medical journals to do a solid job in theme publishing, to play the role of publications as the main propaganda front, and to help promote the development of health care. *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* has always been committed to the publication purpose of "facing the clinic, highlighting practicality, focusing on the integration of theory with practice, and improving the level of diagnosis and treatment of diseases by clinical dentists in the department of

stomatology". It always puts social benefits in the first place and strives to achieve the unity of social and economic benefits. In order to promote the development of health care, our journal has been deeply engaged in creating high-quality thematic publishing and integrating new methods to enhance the effectiveness of thematic publishing. Among them, the thematic publishing-"History, Present Status and Future Developmental Trend of Oral Health Science Integrated Humanity in China-By Review of One Century's Advances in Dental Prevention at the Nationwide Basis" in the column of "A Century of Commitment to People's Health by the Communist Party of China" was rated as an excellent achievement in the thematic publishing under the management of the committee. This article summarizes the experience of *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* in thematic publishing, aiming to provide a reference for medical journals to improve the quality and effectiveness of thematic publishing.

### \*Corresponding Author:

Junting Wang, Publishing House of Journals and Audiovisual of Practical Medicine, Journal Center of China Medical University, 92 Beier Road, Heping District, Shenyang 110001, Liaoning Province, China. Email: zgskyq@126.com; <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9363-9973>

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## HOLD THE CORRECT ORIENTATION AND CLARIFY THE DIRECTION OF THEMATIC PUBLISHING

The overall design of a journal is centered on its guiding principles. Only by grasping the correct direction can the theme of publishing be clearly defined. Health is an inevitable requirement for promoting the comprehensive development of the people and a basic condition for economic and social development. The Communist Party of China and the country have always attached great importance to people's health. During the 13th Five-Year-Plan period, the Communist Party of China prioritized the development of safeguarding people's health and made decisions and deployments to implement the Healthy China strategy. In the 14th Five-Year-Plan for National Health, it is once again emphasized that it is necessary to further improve the health system, continuously improve the quality of medical and health services, and continue to work hard to promote the construction of a healthy China, continuously meeting the growing health needs of the people.<sup>[1]</sup>

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, especially since the reform and opening, China's medical and health industry has steadily developed, and the medical and health service system has become increasingly sound, laying an important foundation for achieving a healthy China. However, the contradiction between the overall insufficient supply of health services and the continuous growth of demand remains prominent at present. At this time, medical journals must play a correct guiding role in promoting the development of health and wellness in China, which to firmly grasp the political and professional attributes of health and wellness work, to focus on comprehensively promoting the construction of a healthy China, to focus on key tasks and contradictions in health and wellness, and solidly carry out the main topic propaganda work, providing strong ideological guarantees and strong spiritual strength for the 14th Five-Year-Plan of health and wellness.

The readership of *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* is mainly composed of oral clinicians and dental students, so keeping up with the development direction of the oral health care industry in real time has always been a key focus of our work. In 2016, the "Tutorial for Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Plan" clearly proposed to "strengthen oral health work" and "promote a healthy lifestyle for all the people".<sup>[2]</sup> In 2017, the "China's Medium-to-Long Term Plan for the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Diseases (2017-2025) under the Healthy China Initiative" also called for special actions such as reducing salt, oil, and sugar, promoting healthy oral health, healthy weight, and

healthy bones.<sup>[3]</sup> In 2019, the "China's oral health action plan (2019-2025)" issued by National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China proposed to focus on prevention and move forward to achieve the goal of oral health management for the entire population and throughout their life cycle.<sup>[4]</sup> In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) published the "Global Oral Health Status Report" and included oral health in the agenda of non-communicable diseases and universal health coverage.<sup>[5]</sup> It could be seen that "healthy oral" has gradually become one of the important tasks of "healthy China", and jointly promoting the development of oral health care and achieving the vision of oral health for all the people is the responsibility of dental journals. *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* focused on the actual oral health problems of the people, promoting the publicity of new technologies, new concepts, and new developments in oral health in real time. In the column of "A Century of Commitment to People's Health by the Communist Party of China", we aimed to promote the development of oral health care and made full preparations for a new journey towards oral health for all the people.

## CAREFULLY PLAN THE TOPICS AND DEEPEN THE CONTENT OF THE THEME PUBLICATION

After correctly grasping the direction of theme publishing, the topic selection and planning work becomes the top priority. Theme publishing requires a high degree of unity between height and temperature, a combination of modernity and guidance, and a balance between depth and accuracy of content. In addition, theme publishing in medical journals can also integrate academic professionalism and profound thought, cutting into the theme from an academic perspective, so that academic resources can better serve national strategies, making theme publishing based on academic content more credible and influential. Topic selection and planning is the soul of theme publishing, and there are rules to follow. Most of them start with clarifying the direction of topic selection, identifying the entry point of topic selection, and deepening and refining the content of topic selection. Adding academic considerations in each aspect may be an effective strategy for medical journals to create high-quality theme publishing.

### **The selected topic should be of high academic quality**

The thematic publishing of medical journals should have both political and academic height. The Chinese story should be told in an academic way, highlighting China's confidence in culture, and spreading the power of China's medical science and technology. Taking the column of "A Century of Commitment to People's

Health by the Communist Party of China" as an example, it should be a comprehensive display of the brilliant achievements in the development of China's health care industry, creating a strong confidence, warm and popular public opinion atmosphere for the development of health care industry, and laying a solid foundation for the comprehensive and full-cycle protection of people's health. Based on this, *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* focused on the oral health issues that were of great concern to the people, focusing on important decisions, major activities, and great academic achievements in the historical process of health care since the founding of the Communist Party of China. It was found that the academic research direction has gradually shifted from "curing diseases as the center" to "prevention as the center". In 1989, under the joint initiative of nine national ministries and commissions, September 20th of each year was designated as "Chinese Teeth Care Day", aiming to mobilize all sectors of society to participate in supporting oral preventive health care through the "Chinese Teeth Care Day" activities, and enhance their awareness and ability of self-oral health care. Therefore, the topic selection with the development of oral preventive medicine as the main direction was formed.

### **Senior authors enhance the academic influence of theme publishing**

The topic of thematic publishing should have depth and height. The content of theme publishing should be rigorous and authoritative. Therefore, the requirements for their authors are very high. Authors need to understand the party and state policies and cultural development laws to lead the trend of the times and guide readers' cognition. Furthermore, authors of theme publishing of medical journal also need to have solid professional knowledge and profound academic attainments and be able to analyze the macro level of theme publishing from a micro perspective, making it easier for readers to understand the connotation of theme publishing. Based on this, *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* planned to invite experts with high academic status and professional influence in the field of oral preventive medicine to write manuscripts, to thoroughly explain the history and significance of oral preventive medicine, to summarize the growth experience of oral disease prevention, to point out the direction of discipline development and work strategy deployment. Professor Bian Jinyou is the chairman of the first session of the Professional Committee of Oral Preventive Medicine of the Chinese Stomatological Association (1997-2006). He has served as a Chinese official at the WHO, a director of the Department of Oral Preventive Medicine at Peking University School of Stomatology, a deputy head of the National Dental

Disease Prevention and Control Guidance Group, and a chairman of the China Dental Disease Prevention and Control Foundation. He has long been committed to domestic and international oral disease prevention and oral preventive medicine education. Asking Professor Bian Jinyou to write this manuscript will have a strong impact on the medical field at home and abroad. With the help of the editorial board, our editorial department has contacted Professor Bian Jinyou and learned that he has been working hard to improve oral humanistic literacy in recent years. In addition, he was willing to write about the development history of China's dental prevention in the past century. Therefore, the topic selection was established with the main content of China's oral health science humanities, the history, current situation, and future development trend of oral preventive medicine.

### **The quality of content ensures the professionalism of thematic publishing**

When increasing the academic content of thematic publishing of medical journals, it is necessary to ensure the quality of the content, and to improve credibility and academic professionalism through real stories, scientific analysis, and rational interpretation. Taking the article "History, Present Status and Future Developmental Trend of Oral Health Science Integrated Humanity in China-By Review of One Century's Advances in Dental Prevention at the Nationwide Basis" as an example:<sup>[6]</sup> Firstly, in a narrative form, Professor Bian Jinyou was asked to elaborate on the development process of oral preventive medicine from the late 1930s to the present, following a timeline. Breaking away from the routine and stylized content of previous thematic publishing, it reveals the author's true emotions and enhances the article's appeal. Secondly, in a combination of images and text, a large number of historically significant photographs were published, such as Shanghai school oral hygiene posters from the early 1980s, the first National Love Teeth Day poster in 1989, and the promotional pages for the National New Long March Campaign for Oral Health Prevention from 1997 to 1998. These enhance the expressiveness of the content and improve the article's appeal and credibility. Thirdly, in the second half of the article, the writing style was changed from narrative to explanatory, analyzing the difficulties in the current development of oral preventive medicine and providing clear guidance for future work. This directly addresses the dilemma and points the way out of the encirclement, increasing the logic and scientific nature of the article. Finally, the author's writing characteristics were retained, including poems and classical Chinese, capturing the reader's attention and enhancing the inclusiveness and artistry of the

article.

## INTEGRATE COMMUNICATION AND EXPAND THE PUBLICITY EFFORTS OF THEMATIC PUBLISHING

In the new era, medical journals should keep pace with the times, adapt to the development of practice, and play a new role through the integration of new technologies, new materials, and media. *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* has always embraced new technologies and grasped new trends with a scientific attitude, strengthened the construction of the all-media communication system, and created a good environment for the development of health care and medical talent training. In addition, *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* has formulated a comprehensive "Interim Measures for New Media Management" and strengthened management, providing a solid backing for the integrated dissemination.

The dissemination of thematic publishing also requires adapting to the requirements of the times, innovating the way of content presentation, and strengthening the content construction of publishing integration and development. The main promotional objective of thematic publishing of *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* is to promote the overlapping advantages of paper media and new media, so as to achieve complementary advantages and mutual drainage between paper media and new media. In addition, *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* has always adhered to the people-centered development ideology, closely focusing on the people's oral health issues from the topic selection and planning and paying more attention to meeting the needs of readers for new types of interaction (with a sense of participation, experience, and immersion) during the promotion. During the same period as the publication of the paper media, *Chinese Journal of Practical Stomatology* promoted thematic publishing articles through WeChat official account, and on September 20th, the "Chinese Teeth Care Day", we jointly promoted the article with oral health public welfare activities to increase attention, expand influence, enhance pertinence, and give full play to the functions of new media platforms, effectively expanding the dissemination and reach of thematic publishing articles. Furthermore, at the academic conference on oral preventive medicine, experts were invited to interpret the article, allowing doctors and medical students to better understand the development process of oral preventive medicine, appreciate the hardships along the way, and inherit and spread the spirit of the older generation, thus fully exerting the academic guidance,

value guidance, and era leading role of the thematic publishing.

The thematic publishing-"History, Present Status and Future Developmental Trend of Oral Health Science Integrated Humanity in China-By Review of One Century's Advances in Dental Prevention at the Nationwide Basis" was successfully rated as an excellent achievement in the thematic publishing under the management of the committee in 2021. In the 2021 collection of excellent themed promotional works, a total of 30 sponsoring units submitted 489 kinds of thematic publishing achievements. Among the 48 outstanding thematic publishing selected, our journal's article was the only one in the field of oral medicine. This is a recognition of the work of our journal, which further expands its influence.

## CONCLUSION

In the context of building world-class journals, thematic publishing is one of the important development directions for medical journals. Medical journals need to adhere to the correct orientation, establish a global vision, explore content resources, and enhance originality. We should closely focus on the main line of "healthy China", build journal brands, highlight journal characteristics, and better meet the needs of readers. This will provide theoretical support and value guidance for promoting the development of China's health care industry. Thematic publishing with a certain academic height, content that balances academic and professional themes, and promoting integrated communication will all be beneficial to fully realizing the value of thematic publishing and further promoting the high-quality development of medical journals.

## DECLARATIONS

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### Author contributions

Zhao LY: Methodology, Software. Wang JT: Conceptualization, Writing—Original draft, Writing—Review and Editing. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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### Ethical approval

Not applicable.

### Conflict of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.



### **Data availability statement**

No additional data.

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