

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE AT JOURNAL OF AYUB MEDICAL COLLEGE ABBOTTABAD (JAMC)

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Editorship of a scientific journal is a very tough task and demands whole-time efforts to maintain the academic and technical standards of the journal. As publication of research work in standard medical journals is mandatory for appearing in the postgraduate examination, selection for a job, and subsequent promotion, the editors receive a lot of scientific work for possible publication, and they face a lot of pressure for an early publication. The authors demand facilitation for quick publication of their work, and the editors have to look into the standard of the output. Keeping a balance between demands and supply is very hard and some times culminates into rejection of or delay in publication of an article, mostly resulting in a complaint from the authors. The editors must not compromise on the standard of their output under any circumstances.

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Being editor of two medical journals, namely Journal of Ayub Medical College Abbottabad (J Ayub Med Coll Abbottabad, JAMC) and Pakistan Journal of Physiology (Pak J Physiol, PJP) is a matter of pride for me. The responsibilities of being the Chief Editor of a reputable indexed journal have been the best time of my life. The Journal of Ayub Medical College Abbottabad was publishing 30–50 pages per issue when the editorship responsibilities were put on my shoulders. It grew to a size of 225 pages published quarterly due to excessive input from our valued authors from home and abroad, even with a rejection rate of more than 70%. The editorial team has a bunch of shining figures who have been working hard day and night, even while travelling abroad, as their efforts to sustain the heavy workload of JAMC.

The editorial processing and review at JAMC includes receiving the articles in email or as hard copy, sending 'Acknowledgement' to the corresponding author, preliminary editorial review, submission to appropriate peer reviewers, reminding the reviewers to expedite review, sending the reviewers' comments to the authors and getting back the corrected scripts, putting the scripts in printing queue after sending 'Acceptance Letter' if the script is finally accepted by the editorial board for printing.

The subsequent process consists of re-shaping the script for publishing with composing, re-checking and verification of bibliography, and final proof reading. Placements of the articles in an appropriate sequence, page numbering and final entry in the content page are the last things done before the journal is given under press. Thereafter, the print edition is published as hard copy, and uploaded as online edition.

Maintaining the academic standards, besides technical accuracy, are really tough tasks and primary

factors taking a journal to higher ranking. This is especially true when the editors face a lot of pressure from the authors to publish their work 'in the next issue' of the journal. There has been a critical shortage of the work force at the JAMC in the recent past and some times the chief editor had to play 'the captain's inning' too! Thanks to Almighty Allah that most of the heads of the Institution have been keen in progress of the journals we are publishing, especially the current patron of the JAMC who is enthusiastic about the quality and quantity of the output, and is steering the team quite well.

There were many incidences where an article was submitted with a 'special' request to publish it soon because somebody had to appear in the fellowship/PhD examination, or had to be promoted after that publication. The editors did consider the status of the author and the article but never compromised on the quality of the published work. At many instances the editorial board refused to accept the script for publication, while good research work found its place quickly in JAMC. Some of my dear friends asked me if there was a 'fast track' system in JAMC like many others do have it. In all instances my reply was that there is no fast track system with us, no matter others might be having it!

During my long standing affiliation with JAMC I learnt a lot of professionalism through sweet and bitter experience dealing with the authors, sustaining pressure from my huge circle of friends, some times even my bosses too, and I tried my level best to keep the high standards of the journals I have been editing. I had opportunity to attend/facilitate a bunch of useful workshops on medical writing, medical editing, ethics, statistical analyses and review. In return a team of young medical editors, bibliographers, composers, and some reviewers has

emerged to take forward my tasks of publishing high quality medical research work as print and online editions.

Now that I have retired from Ayub Medical College after 36 years of my teaching career varying from a lecturer to principal and chief executive, and from a member of editorial board of JAMC to chief editor, I can rest with satisfaction of leaving behind my Journal in safe hands with a hope to be seeing it even more rapidly growing journal ranking higher than others from the region.

I have joined another institution and have started spadework on another journal with the name 'Kashmir Journal of Medical Sciences', Kashmir J Med Sci (KJMS) which will publish its 1st issue shortly. I hope to be fully benefiting from my editorial experience at JAMC and adding another shining star in the galaxy of reputed medical journals of the region. I am relying in this matter on the prospective authors and contributors, and the

governmental support in launching the journal.

I might have at times been harsh to some of my friends and colleagues, but I keep nothing in my heart and I still love them as good friends, co-workers, seniors and juniors. I see and feel the sentiments of my colleagues, and especially my student —my children, which kept me going well through thick and thin in the past and whose support was a great driving force behind me 'to be doing more than duty' as a teacher and a journal editor. I apologise if somebody felt hurt due to any action or deed which I did, of course in good faith to the cause of medical education and research.

REFERENCES

1. Journal of Ayub Medical College, Abbottabad.
<http://www.ayubmed.edu.pk/JAMC>
2. Pakistan Journal of Physiology.
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