

Importance of General Medical Journal

Over the last few decades there has been a tremendous development in the management of various diseases like cardiovascular and many cancers with a significantly better outcome and over-all survival. These favorable outcomes, which are primarily due to humongous research, are not only limited to developed world but also in the developing countries although at a relatively lower magnitude. The fundamental source for this global dissemination is the published medical journals. Among the medical journals, general medical journals do have a broader readership as compared to journals pertinent to a specific modality. Physician community of the under-developed or developing countries, which unfortunately have higher burden of diseases, do have limited access to few medical journals. Therefore a general medical journal must include material that is robust enough scientifically with an understandable language to help and attract practicing healthcare professionals to practice medicine in a better way.

A peer review general medical journal must have a reasonably good impact factor. Impact factor is defined as the frequency of an average article of a journal which has been cited in a particular year, divided by the total number of articles published in the previous two years. Higher impact factor tells the readers about the credibility, quality of published material and its influence on health policy. Published researches in journals having high impact factor, are influential enough to change non-evidence based practice and health policies. Two randomized clinical trials comparing low and high doses of radioiodine-131 therapy in carcinoma of thyroid were published in the 3rd May 2012 issue of New England Journal of Medicine.^{1,2} Results of these trials are the basis of new recommendations about indications and doses of radioiodine-131 in the recently published guidelines of American Thyroid Associations.³

A general medical journal must have included research articles based on adequately conducted studies, review articles and interesting case reports to attract its readers. In addition, it must also include material or glossary pertinent to biostatistics in an easy and understandable language for readers they come across with statistical component of a research article. Few researchers in developing countries are in favor of publishing the good local researches only in local peer review journals. This approach is geared to improve the impact factor of local peer review journals which are significantly low as compared to international journals. However, this policy or approach is considered mere to isolation by the majority. In fact the general medical journals must include international researches so their readers from developing countries could update themselves along international trends and they could exchange their experiences as well. This would help these journals to prepare local practitioners about new drugs or strategy, so they could use them in an effective manner once available in their countries. Another important requirement for general medical journal to have an expected impact is to make its accessibility easy to the readers. This is possible by making them online with free access (i.e. without charges) to residents, general practitioners and other people related to healthcare. This strategy raises a valid point regarding the financial feasibility of such journals. In this regard, the editorial board must seek the support of different vendors, pharmaceutical companies and government institutions supervising health and research like higher education commission (HEC).

In Pakistan, there are few indexed peer review general medical journals. These journals have variable processing time and do have publication charges which in some cases seem unjustified. We do understand that publication charge is necessary to meet the expenses associated with printing, publishing and maintenance of website. However, it is discouraging for young doctors who want to

publish their research work in peer reviewed journals. Pakistan Journal of Radiology is committed to its motto of providing a sustainable and reliable platform to young researcher of this region to get published their work without publication charges so far. We are grateful to the Mr. Ejaz Mirza, CEO of Allmed Solution Pakistan for immense financial support. We hope that other vendors must also come forward to support and foster scientific publications as this would promote the research culture in Pakistan and we could see better number of indexed journals from Pakistan as it happened in our neighbor country.

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