

Impact factor of Pakistani medical journals

Burhan Ahmed,¹ Abdurrahman Akhlaq Husain,² Kiran Dossani³

Madam, the present era has witnessed an up-surge in the research trends in Pakistani medical community. This includes not only an increased number of articles being published but also creation of new journals.¹ Unfortunately, there is paucity of quality medical journals from Pakistan, which can be appreciated from the fact that of the over 50 biomedical journals, only 4 are indexed by MedLine. Moreover, even lesser number of journals have an impact-factor (IF). IF is considered as an instrument of assessing the quality of a journal and its provided by Thomson Scientific, USA. IF is primarily dependent on the citations a journal receives for its articles.

Publications in journals of higher IF, is imperative to secure funding and promotion of the researchers, hence investigators intend to submit their articles to journals with higher IF. This poses difficulties for local researchers as Pakistani journals have low IF's and international journals are ambivalent to publish articles having a limited scope for an international audience. The above mentioned arguments might be contributory to the fact that despite having approximately one fifth of the human population, South-Asians contribute to a mere 1.2% of the medical literature published.²

It's high time for the Pakistani journals to address the concerns of local investigators and provide them ample opportunities to publish their manuscripts in local but

high IF journals. It will only be possible if journals follow the policy of suggesting authors to cite relevant and contextual papers from the local studies. If majority of the articles have citations from the local journals, it will serve the purpose for both the investigators and the journals. Meneghini et al. showed that authors from the developing countries do not cite the local studies when they intend to publish articles in main stream journals.³

Pakistani journals do not publish more than one or two reviews per issue and rarely any systematic reviews which is contrary to the reputed journals. Review articles bring citations and guide the medical practice. A significant reason is that Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), does not recognize review articles as full papers.⁴

Hence, it's a collective responsibility of the authors, editors, journals and PMDC to encourage each other for creating an environment where data from the local studies be cited properly. It's a long process and demands constant hard work, however the time has arrived to start now.

References

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¹Jinnah Hospital, Lahore. ^{2,3}Civil Hospital, Karachi.

Correspondence: Burhan Ahmed. Email: drburhanahmed@gmail.com