

Publication audit for the Year 2009 and revised guidelines for authors of Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences

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Annual publication audit and its analysis by Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences is now a routine for the last couple of years.¹⁻² It helps to find out the strength as well as weaknesses and how best to plan for the future. A critical look at the Year 2009 has revealed that there has been a constant increase in the number of manuscripts being received for publication from within the country as well as overseas. During the Year under review we received 498 manuscripts as against 140 in 2004, 209 in 2005, 268 in 2006, 354 in 2007 and 427 in 2008. The number of manuscripts received from Pakistan has also shown steady increase starting from 78 in 2004 to 146 in 2009. (Table-I). While the total number of manuscripts received from Islamic Republic of Iran has remained almost the same 170 in 2009 as against 169 in 2008 there has been over 100% increase in manuscripts from Turkey, eighty in 2009 as against 34 in 2008 which is very encouraging.

Similarly the number of manuscripts published in 2009 has also increased but not much, 214 in 2009 (excluding correspondence) as against 203 in 2008. The number of manuscripts published from Islamic Republic of Iran has slightly decreased 72 in 2009 as against 89 in 2007 and 83 in 2008. This is quite understandable because of the strict peer review and quality control measures which are being enforced. Though disappointing for some authors but it is essential to maintain some reasonable standard. The number of manuscripts accepted and published during 2009 from Turkey has also substantially increased, 24 in 2009 as against just two in 2008 which depicts the increasing confidence of Turkish authors in Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences. Manuscripts published from Pakistan has remained almost same during the last three years or showed a little

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Table-I: Manuscript received (2004 – 2009)

Country	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Australia	-	-	-	-	-	01
Bangladesh	04	03	07	07	06	07
Bahrain	-	-	-	-	01	-
Brunei	-	-	-	01	-	-
Cameroon	-	01	-	-	-	2
Canada	01	03	-	-	-	-
China	-	-	01	-	01	-
Egypt	-	-	02	-	-	01
India	02	09	04	21	06	10
Ireland	01	01	-	-	02	-
Iran	21	74	90	149	169	170
Iraq	-	02	03	02	04	09
Jordan	04	08	14	10	04	09
Kuwait	01	02	02	02	-	01
Lebanon	01	-	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	-	-	03	01	03	04
Nepal	01	01	01	-	-	-
Netherland	-	-	01	-	-	-
Nigeria	02	07	16	32	34	33
Oman	-	-	03	01	-	01
Pakistan	78	76	90	98	123	146
Palestine	02	01	05	05	04	05
Poland	01	01	03	01	01	01
Qatar	-	01	-	-	-	-
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	01
Russia	-	-	02	-	-	-
Saudi Arabia	09	10	11	11	21	20
South Africa	-	-	-	-	01	03
South Korea	-	-	-	-	02	03
Sudan	-	-	-	-	-	02
Thailand	01	01	-	-	01	01
Tunisia	02	-	-	-	01	03
Turkey	05	02	02	05	34	80
UAE	01	-	-	-	04	03
USA	02	01	-	02	-	01
UK	01	05	08	06	05	01
Total (33)	140	209	268	354	427	498

decrease i.e. 81 in 2007 as against 61 in 2008 and just 70 in 2009. (Table-II).

If we look at the cities in Pakistan from where most of the manuscripts were contributed during 2009, as expected Karachi remains on top 54, followed by Hyderabad with 26. (Table-III) It is again in line with the submission pattern reported by JPMA another reputed Pakistani Journal (Personal communication). There are various reasons

Table-II: Manuscripts Published (2006–2009)

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009
Australia	-	-	-	01
Bangladesh	01	05	05	04
Bahrain	-	-	-	01
Brunei	-	01	-	-
Canada	01	-	-	-
Holland	01	-	-	-
India	06	10	05	-
Iran	38	89	83	72
Iraq	02	02	01	02
Jordan	06	07	04	01
Kuwait	-	02	01	-
Malaysia	-	01	01	04
UAE	-	-	02	03
Nigeria	03	13	21	13
Nepal	-	01	01	-
Oman	-	03	-	01
Palestine	03	02	04	01
Pakistan	48	81	61	70
Poland	-	01	-	-
Russia	-	01	-	-
Saudi Arabia	06	08	05	09
South Africa	-	-	-	02
South Korea	-	-	-	02
Thiland	-	-	-	02
Turkey	01	03	02	24
UK	04	04	05	02
Sri Lanka	-	-	01	-
USA	-	02	01	-
Total	120	236	203	214

for that. Firstly the research and publication culture is bit strong in Karachi; secondly the authors get lot of facilities here in the shape of workshops on medical writing, research methodology organized by various institutions which is quite helpful for them. Thirdly authors from other cities feel it more comfortable to get their manuscripts published in journals which do not follow strict peer review and since most of these journals are recognized by PM&DC and it does serve their purpose of getting credit for selection, promotions, they are quite happy to get their papers published in these journals quickly rather than waiting for too long which is the case with reputed journals following strict peer review and have long waiting list. As regards published manuscripts from Pakistan during 2009, it is again Karachi on top with 34 followed by Hyderabad 11, Rawalpindi-Islamabad eight and Lahore five. (Table-IV)

As expected the largest number of manuscripts

Table-III: Details of Manuscript received from Pakistan during 2009

Sindh:	
Karachi	54
Hyderabad	26
Mirpurkhas	10
Dadu	01
Larkana	01
Sukkur	01
Punjab:	
Lahore	07
Rawalpindi / Islamabad	07
Faisalabad	03
Multan	02
Gujranwala	01
Sargoda	01
Khyber Pakhtoon Khaw:	
Peshawar	09
Sawat	03
Total	126

published during 2009 fall in the category of original articles, one hundred seventy seven out of two hundred seventeen. (Table-V). Primary acceptance during 2009 was 78 out of 212 (36.8%). Number of manuscripts accepted after revision was 116 out of 212 (54.7%) while eighteen out of 212 (8.5%) manuscripts were accepted after numerous revisions. (Table-VI) This also shows that primary acceptance has showed a slight increase though not much significant.

Table-IV: Manuscripts published from Pakistan during 2009

Sindh:	
Karachi	34
Hyderabad	11
MirpurKhas	4
Punjab:	
Lahore	5
Rawalpindi / Islamabad	8
Mansehra	1
Sargodha	1
Bawalpur	1
Faisalabad	1
Multan	1
Khyber Pakhtoon Khaw:	
Peshawar	2
Swat	1
Total	70

Table-V: Category of Manuscripts Published during 2009

Original Article	177
Case Report	19
Short Communication	5
Correspondence	5
Editorial	4
Review Article	2
Brief Communication	2
Clinical Case Series	1
Issues for debate	1
CME	1
Total	217

Rejections: Seventy eight manuscripts were rejected during 2009 even after more than one revision and this included 47 from Iran, seven from Pakistan, three from Palestine, seven from Nigeria, eight from Turkey, three from Saudi Arabia, two from India and one from Morocco.

Upgradation by HEC: A significant achievement that we had during 2009 was that Higher Education Commission after evaluation has improved the category of Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences to Y from Z which is recognition of the high standard maintained by the journal.³

Revised Publication Guidelines

After in-depth analysis and taking into account various issues concerning quality of manuscripts, we have also revised the publication guidelines with effect from May 1st 2010. Some of the measures being taken are as under:

- * We will no longer be entertaining KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) studies or simple surveys as we feel this is not a high quality research though it helps some authors to increase their CV. In fact it is more suitable for the beginners or medical students.
- * Only selected animal studies will be processed.
- * To encourage medical students, manuscripts received from them will be processed and accommodated in Students section but there will be no compromise on quality and peer review.
- * All manuscripts received henceforth must be accompanied by letter of approval from the Institutional Review Board/Ethics Committee of their respective institutions. It will be strictly enforced.
- * Authorship criteria as per International Com-

Table-VI: Acceptance status of manuscripts published during 2009 (excluding correspondence)

	No.	%
Primary Acceptance	78	36.8
Acceptance after 1st Revision	116	54.7
Acceptance after more than 2 Revisions	18	8.5
Total	212	100

mittee of Medical Journal Editors will also be strictly enforced and manuscript must contain details of contribution of each author.

- * Despite our best efforts, we have not yet been able to reduce the peer review time and accelerate this process. Still 10-15% authors have to wait for too long since the reviewers do not respond in time. This being an honorary job, we certainly cannot force them but our efforts continue to further expand the reviewer's database and reduce this period in the days to come.
- * During 2011 we are also hopeful to get the Impact Factor which will further enhance the prestige and credibility of the journal.

All these steps are being taken to realize our objective of making Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences as one of the leading peer reviewed biomedical journal from this part of the world. We are grateful to members of the Editorial Board and Reviewers for their help and assistance. We also wish to thank the authors from within the country and abroad for their patience despite delays in peer review.⁴ They have shown confidence in Pak J Med Sci and continue to contribute quality manuscripts which will help us realize our dream.

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