

Towards publishing according to research priorities

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In recent years, the visibility and credibility of the regional bio-medical journals have rapidly increased in most developing countries. To encourage and promote research culture, it is important that research-support agencies should enhance both the quality and quantity of work published in local medical journals. Not only that improving the quality of local biomedical journals should be an essential aspect of their current and future scientific policies.

On the other hand, research priority setting should be well defined in low- and middle-income countries. Publishing the results of studies in Western journals may influence the priority setting of the research and in turn the findings of these studies in order to adopt the priorities of Western communities and journals. Thus adopting a global approach the research scientists should include the priorities of developing countries by taking into account the disease pattern and problems faced by these countries in the health sector. Improving the quality of prioritized research studies as well as the quality of local journals will strengthen the developing country leadership of research agendas, may reduce the grey literature, and it might also help in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The newly acquired visibility of the journals published in developing countries has profoundly influenced the research studies and publications, and directed them toward research priorities of such communities, and toward a practical science. As stated by Avicenna in the Canon of Medicine, "Medicine is the science by which we learn the

various states of the human body in health and when not in health, and the means by which health is likely to be lost and, when lost, is likely to be restored back to health. In other words, it is the art whereby health is conserved and the art whereby it is restored after being lost. While some divide medicine into a theoretical and a practical [applied] science, others may assume that it is only theoretical because they see it as a pure science. But, in truth, every science has both a theoretical and a practical side."

There is still a need for better approaches to empower the research funders to regulate the relative weight to assign to studies based on the priorities of developing communities, and publications should elaborate research topics at international level along with their implications for the developing third world countries.

This special issue of Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences contains a number of manuscripts in different disciplines of medicine, to present a general overview of some research projects and their interpretations at regional level. We are extremely grateful to the editorial team and management of Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences for making it possible.

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