

Proceedings of Committee on Publication Ethics Congress
organized by Shiraz University of Medical Sciences
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Shiraz (Islamic Republic of Iran): Iranian Society of Medical Editors in collaboration with Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) London organized a regional conference of COPE under the auspices of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences on November 24-25th 2011. It attracted a large number of medical editors from the region as well as a vast majority of medical editors from Iran.

Inaugural Session

Welcoming the participants **Dr. Behrooz Astaneh** a Council Member of COPE who is also Head of the Medical Journalism Department at Shiraz University besides Deputy Editor of Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences pointed out that ethical publishing has always remained a major concern of all editors worldwide. As medical editors it is one of our responsibilities to adhere to such an acceptable behavior because we are dealing with publishing research which is directly related to human health and can affect people's morbidity and mortality.

Continuing **Dr. Behrooz Astaneh** who is also Vice President of Iranian Society of Medical Editors said that in the new era of ever-growing science, ethics is a necessity and no longer a luxury. By organizing this regional conference of COPE, we have succeeded in presenting standard international guidelines to regional and Iranian medical editors besides proving our invaluable capacity and potential to the international publishing community. Shiraz University of Medical Sciences the host institution, he added has the distinction of starting a unique Master of Science course in medical journalism. The Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences, he further stated was the second English medical journal in Iran which was established in 1970.

Dr. Mohammad Hadi Imanieh Chancellor of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences in his address

called upon the medical editors to concentrate on quality of journals and ethical health of manuscripts accepted for publication. Editors must adhere to ethical code and produce good role models for junior science editors.

A message from **Dr. Elizabeth Wager** Chair, Committee on Publication Ethics was also read on this occasion by **Dr. Behrooz Astaneh** who was the moving spirit behind this academic activity. The message stated that COPE was founded in 1997 and it has grown from a handful of medical journal editors who met informally to discuss the problems facing them to a truly international organization. COPE now has around seven thousand members working all over the world in a wide range of disciplines not just medicine and science. This year COPE has organized its meetings in UK, Australia, and America and now in Iran. COPE was also represented at meetings held in China, Brazil and Philippines.

During our rapid expansion, we have always been conscious to meet the needs of our members wherever they might work. Despite the fact that our members edit a wide range of diverse journals, we have been struck by the similarities rather than the differences between them. Editors and publishers face similar ethical issues. The need and expectations of researchers and authors for fair peer review are universal. The ethical challenges of balancing editorial freedom with commercial realities are the same everywhere, the message added.

Dr. Ali Akbari Sari Director of the Commission for Accreditation and Improvement of Iranian Medical Journals in his address presented an overview of Iranian Medical Journals. He pointed out that the number of medical journals published from Iran in 2011 has increased to two hundred twelve from ninety in 2004. Fifteen of these journals are included in PubMed, seventy one in Scopus; one hundred sixty-three are covered by Google Scholar. All this indicates improvement in quality of Iranian Medical Journals. While the quantity of the number of journals has improved rapidly, we need to ensure better monitoring, further enhancement of quality, and tackle the issues of plagiarism and redundant publications.

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Scientific Sessions

Seyed Mehdi Seyedi Dean of Science and Research, Vice President for Science and Technology at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences was the first speaker in the first scientific session. He spoke on the role of scientists in society. Many institutions, he said, now consider quality of papers and not quantity of papers. Scientists are largely a self regulated community and it is the peers who regulate it. We have people at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences who investigate scientific misconduct.

Publications, Seyed Mehdi further stated are susceptible to abuse. He also referred to authorship and credit issues, intellectual issues and public benefit. Earlier, **Dr. Izet Masic** from Bosnia talked about ethical dilemmas during preparation writing and presentation of scientific research results while **Dr. Fatema Jawad** from Pakistan discussed common unethical encounters experienced by an Editor from a developing country. She pointed out that over the years the number of authors per manuscript has increased. She was of the view that there is a need to ensure that authors strictly follow the ICMJE authorship criteria. Referring to the JPMA which she edits, she said that their rejection rate is about 70%. Some of the important issues which they face include authorship, plagiarism and then referred to some studies during which the papers were withdrawn when the authors were questioned about the authorship issues.

Dr. Masood Jawaid from Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences presented highlights from his study of a survey on authorship. This study was conducted to assess knowledge and views of researchers on criteria for authorship by ICMJE, their current practice of choosing authors of scientific papers, views about gift authorship and experiences of authorship problem. It was a cross sectional survey of Medical University faculty members by self-administered questionnaire. Main outcome measure were Awareness and use of criteria for authorship by ICMJE, views on which contributions to research merit authorship, perceptions about gift authorship and strategies for reducing it, and experiences of authorship problems. Total of 225 faculty members responded and out of them 16% said they knew ICMJE criteria of authorship but only 1.8% could actually state the all four points of criteria. More than one fourth of respondents said that their name was included when contribution did not merit authorship. Conclusions from this study were that there is gap between editors' criteria for authorship and researchers' practice.

Dr. Ali Akbari Sari from Tehran University of Medical Sciences discussed exploring ethical issues in RCTs published by Iranian Medical Journals during

2005-2009. He pointed out that there has been a rapid increase in publication of Randomized Clinical Trials (RCTs). He also referred to the establishment of Iranmedex the National Iranian Database and the use of CONSORT check list for publication of RCTs. Papers for the study, he presented, were selected randomly, most of them were reviewed by two reviewers. About 93% of papers had good randomization, 11% had concealed allocation, 45% were double blind, and patients consent was taken in 71% of the studies while, 60% of the studies got ethical approval. There were many manuscripts which did not report ethical committee approval and similarly many did not take informed consent of the patents. He was of the view that RCTs publication need more control and monitoring. He also referred to the Iranian Registration Site for RCTs and felt that use of CONSORT statement is quite helpful. He also discussed the problems with the conduct and reporting of RCTs. All studies, he felt, should go to National Ethics Committee but some can be referred to the Regional Ethical Committees.

This was followed by a unique presentation on image manipulation by **Ms. Sarah Masoumi** from Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences who opined that seeing does not always mean believing. She discussed at length how images can be tampered with and after editing through Photoshop almost a new image is created. At times it is difficult for the reviewer or the editor to detect image manipulation. However some time the editor can detect the image manipulation. She then referred to NIH Image database and Image journal both of which were available free which can be used to detect image manipulation. Some journals do provide guidelines on images manipulation. Continuing, she said that image manipulation was increasing rapidly hence it is important to train editors, reviewers to detect this possible misconduct. She suggested that in case some manipulation has been done to make the image sharper, the author should send the modified and original both images to the editor to ensure that no serious image manipulation has taken place which can give a wrong message to the reader.

Publication misconduct

Charlotte Haug from Norway was the next speaker who delivered an invited talk on Publication misconduct- what is it and why does it matter. In 2011 COPE, he said, has about seven thousand members. It is the result of senior's collaborative effort while researchers are individuals. Publication is seldom by a single researcher and publication is an integral part of research. Science, she said, does not exist unless it is published. Fraud and misconduct will seriously

affect scientific research and it is a problem in scientific publications. Science and scientific community is self regulating and there are problems of fabrication, falsification, plagiarism which are serious in nature. Issues like publishing unethical research, authorship issues, and undeclared conflict of interest were also discussed. Fabricated results are then cited by other journals which results in publication fraud and misconduct. This problem, it was further stated, seems to be increasing. Honest ethical reporting was important for research since we do research to find out truth and advance knowledge. Editors are responsible for putting research in public domain hence they must check it before its publication. Editors should guard integrity of research they publish. It is the duty of the reviewers as well and if the editors do not recognize ethical issues, they have not been doing their job. She concluded her presentation by stating that it does not help to stand on the shoulders of the giants if the shoulders of giants are in the mud.

Panel discussion on Plagiarism

This was followed by a panel discussion on plagiarism and members of the panel included Fatema Jawad from Pakistan, **Charlotte Haug** from Norway, **El Morsy** from Egypt and **Roya Kelishadi** from Iran. During the discussion it was pointed out that if a study has earlier been published in a different language, it is important to disclose it on a prominent place and give reference to the earlier publication. At times some parts from methodology which may be similar may be reproduced. Many a times the mentors are not aware of these issues and they do not educate the young doctors concerning plagiarism. In the recent years plagiarism has increased and some people publish their work with little modification in different journals. While some reproduction in methodology may be acceptable, plagiarism in Discussion was a serious problem. It is the duty of reviewers and editors to check manuscripts for plagiarism. In case some image manipulation is suspected, it should be sent back to the authors. It is also important that incomplete research should not be published.

Charlotte Haug along with Ali Akbari Sari moderated the next session. **Dr. Mohammad Reza Fayyazi Bordbar** from Iran was the first speaker who talked about new ethical issues in writing scientific articles and the role of staff promotion systems in creating knowledge- is it moral or mandatory. He pointed out that creating knowledge has become an important strategic aim of the universities in Iran. He then talked about scientific aspect to promotion of CV of the researchers and innovations of the study. Giving details of scientific studies, he said that at Mashhad University of Medical Sciences 373 studies were

approved since last year. A detailed scrutiny further revealed that almost 68% of them were un-necessary, thirty five studies were found to be excellent and another seventy five were found to be good .

How to develop a research question/hypothesis

This was followed by a Video Conference wherein Trish Groves from UK made a presentation through video link on How to develop a research question/hypothesis which is valuable and also ethical. She was of the view that it is important to know that in today's era of evidence based medicine, what kind of evidence doctors need. Questions are about treatment which are often complex and qualitative which have remained unanswered. It is also important to find out whether the researchers ask useful questions. Always ask specific question to hypothesis. For example it is reported that use of very hot tea is associated with esophageal cancer. We can always show the bright or dark side of the question. It is not at all unethical to ask wrong silly questions. At times questions are not asked in relevant sittings. In some studies inclusion criteria is too selective. One should do proper literature search, previous evidence should be discussed with colleagues before forming the question. Find out what type of information is needed and from where the information is being collected. A question which bothers nobody is considered as poor question. It should make sure that research benefits the future patients and at times publication of such research does reveal patient identity.

Speaking about the ethical issues Trish Groves referred to the quantity of information one would give to the patients before taking their informed consent to participate in the study. Write paper with clear concept and do comparison of the outcomes. Find out did the design match the question. She then referred to the interventions in the study in a population, main outcome measures, exposure of the population to some unseen adverse effects. Conducting unethical research and then getting it published should be discouraged. It is also important to ensure that the design of study should match the question for validity of the study. See what is already known and highlight what this paper adds to the knowledge.

Sima Ajami from Iran discussed the authorship problems, involvement of students in research, adding and deleting an author after submission of the manuscript. As per ICMJE authorship criteria funding, collection of data and supervision of research project does not entitle one to become an author. Similarly Head of the Department or Head of the institution does not entitle someone to be an author. Authorship cannot be gifted for appreciation or encouragement but it should go in acknowledgement

section and so is the case with assistance provided by editorial staff. It is the responsibility of the lead author to discuss and finalize authorship approval and ensure authorship integrity. If all authors have contributed equally then their names should appear in alphabetic order. Students can become co-authors and while rejecting any paper it is important to give specific reasons. Non-availability of software's which are quite expensive is a hindrance to detect plagiarism, she added.

Bibi Sedigheh Fazli Bazzaz from Iran presented report of some misconduct in Iranian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences related to publication in 2010. She emphasized that peer review should be objective, thorough and fair. Peer Review should cover ethical issues, trust of the authors as well as reviewers has to be safeguarded and one should be aware of reactions. She then presented a few case studies of Salami publications and publication of articles by Ph.D candidates.

Dr. Ahmed Said El Morsy from Egypt spoke about reviewers and publication ethics. He pointed out that publication is important for dissemination of science. Most often promotion is the most motivating factor but it should be directed at promotion of health. Major areas of concern, he said, were authorship, peer review, originality, misconduct, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, and duplicate publication. Reviewers, he stated, play an important role in scientific publications. Hence, review should be objective, based on scientific knowledge and it should be done professionally. Selection of reviewers is also important. Reviewers should be polite, friendly, give suggestions for improvement of the manuscript, and maintain a balance between quality control and encouragement of innovation. He also suggested periodic meetings between authors, reviewers and editors to ensure transparency and high quality of the paper. WAME, COPE as well as ICMJE have numerous publications, guidelines on ethical issues.

Dr. Said El Morsy suggested teaching medical students about plagiarism and hoped that the new generation will be much better than us. We must give emphasis on how to avoid plagiarism rather than on detecting plagiarism. Authors should be encouraged to write in their own words. He also referred to the role of Institutional Ethics Committees in informed consent in case of studies on humans and it is also important that reviewers should be educated and trained.

Dr. Abdol Reza Shaghghi from Tabriz Iran discussed urgent needs to find missing pieces in the puzzle of national research ethics strategy. Out of over two hundred biomedical journals published in Iran, 168 are published by Universities of Medi-

cal Sciences. According to the 5th National Development Programme thirty five medical journals should be added in Iran every year. We must pay more attention to ethical issues, discourage ghost and gift authorship. We should take steps to prevent scientific bias as has been done by the West and change our vision, he added. **Dr. Behrooz Astaneh** who was chairing this session in his concluding remarks said that editors should decrease the load of their reviewers by sharing it with others, train their staff and go for professionalism in medical journalism. Do not get upset if your paper is rejected, it may be published by some other journal.

On Day Two of the Conference November 25th **Prof. Roya Kelshadi** from Isfahan University of Medical Sciences was the first speaker and she discussed how to state acknowledgements and conflict of interest. Acknowledgement, she said, is to show gratitude of help to those who though have no direct role in the study but have contributed in the process in different ways. In this section all those are included who do not fulfill criteria for authorship. The authors must also clearly state conflict of interest if any and also include it in the covering letter.

Prof. Ana Marusic from Croatia talked about authorship definitions across disciplines and pointed out that in Physics in systematic Review Surveys there were 743 authors in one of the studies published in 2001 and in 2010 another study had as many as 2080 authors. Order of authorship, she said, should be based on amount of work done by the authors and not on prestige and position. Sometimes if every author has made similar contribution, equal credit should go to all the authors. Different countries have different credit criteria for authorship. Undeserved authorship is often offered due to feelings of obligation or crediting present or future relationship. So far there is no universal agreement on definition of authorship.

Charlotte Haug from Norway delivered an invited talk on publication misconduct and how to deal with it. Science, she said, is not self correcting. One should always follow ethical practical codes. It is easier to give benefit of doubt. Most people involved in misconduct will convince you that nothing needs to be done. What happened was an honest mistake and it won't happen again. They will try to convince you that it is waste of time to pursue misconduct. If there is something wrong with research, it will self correct. Seek advice when you suspect misconduct. It is easy to make mistakes. COPE helps individual cases. COPE has also started e learning courses and different Flow Charts prepared by COPE are an excellent contribution. By following up cases, you can run into problems because it is serious and those persons who

are found guilty will fight back. She then discussed duplicate publication, plagiarism, falsification of data, and change in authorship, ghost and gift authorship. Talking about conflict of interest, she pointed out that if someone asks for withdrawing his/her name from authorship, it is red flag. Ask all authors. Keep the case confidential while you are pursuing it. Do not spread unproven accusations, keep accurate, complete records. Remain neutral, state facts and do not make accusations. Give the accused an opportunity to respond, inform everybody who needs to be informed. Editors cannot investigate and settle authorship disputes. Conflict of interest may be to stop publication by withdrawing as author.

Dr. Mohsen Abdolhasani from Iran was the next speaker who highlighted the Editor's role in scientific misconduct. He opined that editors should learn how to extract summaries and analyze information from information generated by others. Plagiarism.org was another useful software to detect plagiarism, he added. **Akbar Ejraee** gave details of a scientific study of plagiarism in Scopus database from 1990-2010.

Role of academic training in improving ethical standards

In the next session **Soleh Arastoopoor** from Iran discussed a new scientific tool for research performance while **Behrooz Astaneh's** presentation was on the role of academic training in improving ethical standards. He pointed out that today we face different types of ethical problems i.e. authorship disputes, conflict of interest and plagiarism. Some do it intentionally while some others indulge in it due to lack of knowledge. Many editors do not know how to tackle publication misconduct. He suggested short term workshops for faculty members to educate them on these issues. He then discussed the peer review triage i.e. internal review and external peer review, copy editing, ethical issues in medical publishing and how to improve medical journals. So far, he said, we have organized two hundred fifty workshops and trained three hundred faculty members. We have also identified and trained five hundred resource persons in other universities. As a long term measure, we have started Masters in Science course in medical journalism which commenced in 2009. It covers, epidemiology, biostatistics, medicine law, journalism skills, scientific copy editing. Students are selected through national examination. Candidates are supposed to have MSc degree in medicine or related sciences before seeking admission. He then talked about academic training and ethical issues. There are language barriers to fraud and plagiarism. Trained editors know conflict of interest and how to solve the problems. All these measures, he hoped, will go a long

way in changing the trend in medical journalism. He also came up with a new idea of three months fellowship programme for Iranian and Regional Editors which can be started by the department of medical journalism at Shiraz University.

Prof. Ana Marusic from Croatia discussed how editors deal with plagiarism. She pointed out that editing a journal is a team work. It is essential to have a professional team work. It is the responsibility of the editor to protect integrity of journal and publishers. She also pointed out that since 1971; there have been 1961 retractions in Medline. ETBLAST, WCOPYfind are some of the useful software's. She concluded her presentation by stating that quality assurance in editing is a difficult job.

Panel discussion on authorship

The panelists included **Ana Marusic** from Croatia, **Behrooz Astaneh** from Iran and **Shaukat Ali Jawaid** from Pakistan. During the discussion it was pointed out that at times if help of the statistician is sought, they insist on being included as authors. Statistician's involvement in studies is important. It was further stated that it is better to prevent problems rather than solving them. Editors must see the studies carefully and then take responsibility of the whole contents. **Dr. Farrokh Habibzadeh** opined that we should change the authorship guidelines and authorship should be replaced with contributor ship. Contributor ship does not qualify for authorship. It was also suggested that it is up to the academic institutions, universities to decide how they are going to give credit and what authorship means to them and how they are going to evaluate contribution by different authors. Editors are in a very difficult situation and they cannot make a final decision as regards authorship.

Reviewers at times ask for conflict of interest. Some editors publish their own work in their own journals which also came under discussion. Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawaid opined that there was no harm in publishing in one's own journals as long as the manuscript is treated the same way and goes through the same peer review process. Let us be honest to ourselves, authors and reviewers, he remarked.

Publication Ethics for Surgical Research

It was followed by a video presentation from UK by Trish Groves who spoke on publication ethics in surgical research. She pointed out that it is important that the researchers know the Good Clinical Practice (GCP) guidelines which are also known as ICH guidelines. Declaration of Helsinki was revised in 2008. Publication ethics deals with avoiding misconduct, protect patient identities, declare conflict of interest, protect patient confidentiality, age, sex, loca-

tion, clinical details, tests, results, unusual personal story or contrast photos even if it is a clinical image of a body part.

Talking about ethics and surgical innovation she referred to innovation and development, early experiments through case reports or clinical case series. She summarized it in IDEAL wherein I stands for Innovation, D for development i.e. early other adopters, E for exploration as innovation is now more widely taken up, A for assessment wherein clinical effects and cost effectiveness is compared with established methods while L stands for long term study ensuring safety in routine practice. Speaking about ethical issues in innovative surgery she said that surgeon's conflict of interest may be involved if they are developing a new procedure. Patient may be misled by poorly reported research. Regulation of implantable devices was also discussed in detail. Surgical research reporting need ethically valid study design and cautious interpretation of results.

The next Video conference was by **Dough Altman** from Oxford UK and topic was ethical imperatives of good reporting of research. In this presentation it was stated that research needs clear understanding of what was done. In poor reporting, selective reporting key information is missing, it provides incomplete information, and there is ambiguity in methods and results. Many published articles miss important information which is vital for interpretation. Delayed reporting of any study should also be discouraged. It was also pointed out that in 904 trials of acute ischaemic stroke done during 1953-2008; almost 20% of the completed trials were not properly published. Only 11% of the articles reported all terms and essential details of intervention i.e. drug name, dose, route etc. These days selective reporting is very common. Often cumulative published evidence is misleading and it can have adverse effects on other research, clinicians and patients.

Poor reporting indicates a collective failure of authorities, peer reviewers and editors. There are reporting guidelines asking for minimum information of what was done and how it was done. It is evidence based and reflects conscious opinion. CONSORT statement is a good guideline for reporting RCTs. Most guidelines are not supported by medical journals or adhered to by researchers. Equator network is a resource library for health reporting. Not all research, he said, is published and many research reports are seriously inadequate. Over the time, improvement in this field is rather slow but reporting guidelines exist for most research types. Use of reporting guidelines is the duty of peer reviewers for improving the quality of manuscripts. For authors it is their moral ethical responsibility to publish their

findings and editors should force authors to follow various guidelines, support registration of studies and publication of data results. Funders can also ask for details of the research. He concluded his presentation by stating that good reporting is an essential of doing good research.

Authors and Medical Writers

This was followed by yet another excellent presentation and the speaker was **Prof. Farhad Handjani** President-elect of EMAME and Professor of Dermatology at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. Speaking on the topic of authors and medical writers, he pointed out that it is a new concept in our region. Often two third of research is not published and the major reason is that the researchers have no time and they also lack experience in medical writing. There are language barriers. Medical Writers are usually not doctors but they try to help researchers to report their results in accurate way. He then referred to European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) and American Medical Writers Association (AMWA). India also has one. Authors seek help of medical writers. Ghost authors are different from medical writers as they are not acknowledged. However, in case of medical writers, they are acknowledged and everything is transparent. Medical Writers take less time in preparing the manuscript and it has high chances of getting accepted for publication. It is not only juniors but senior faculty members who use the services of medical writers. It includes both male and female; experienced and not so experienced who use the services of medical writers.

Medical Writers are not named as authors. Their name goes in acknowledgement section. Sometimes they are also involved in literature search and participate in study; hence they can be part of authors. He also referred to the authorship criteria and said that this collaboration between the researchers and medical writer's works perfectly well if the researchers involve the medical writers from the very beginning. In some countries some medical institutions have medical writers as staff members. Key message and data needed for writing the manuscript should be provided to the medical writers who should show it to the authors and then incorporate their suggestions to improve it further. Medical Writers are extremely helpful as they have good knowledge of English language, grammar, editing, making tables, drawing figures and they also help in making online submissions. Prof. Farhad Handjani made it clear that final approval of the manuscript has to be given by the authors. Mere acknowledgement will highlight the role of medical writers. Medical Writers have their own guidelines as regards ethics wherein responsibilities of medical writers are mentioned. Pharma industry

uses the medical writers the most. He was of the view that it is extremely important for our area to become aware of the concept of Medical Writers. There are some agencies who work in the field of medical writing. We need guidelines and programme for training them and work with them.

Ali Eivazi from Iran spoke on Persian editing and health sciences production. The reason for publishing in Persian language was given as to convey the message to the readers who understand better when the message is conveyed in their native language. Persian it was stated is a symbol of our national identity. The objective is to remove defects, common mistakes and improve the language and grammar during editing.

Leila Ghahramani from Iran disused redundant publications in Iranian English articles- How far is too far. She pointed out that according to COPE about 13% of papers are repetition of facts already known. It was stated that medical journals should carry guidelines for authors regarding secondary publication in different languages. If an editor finds a redundant publication, he or she must inform the other journals immediately. In this study 1798 original articles were identified and a sample size of 450 was found reasonable. Twenty four manuscripts had major and eleven manuscripts had minor overlap. Three hundred forty eight manuscripts had no overlap in this study hence the overall incidence of overlap was very low.

Workshop on Editorial Decision and Communication with Authors

Prof. Ana Marusic from Croatia conducted a workshop on Editorial Decision and Communication with Authors. She pointed out that most of the journals do initial screening and reject those papers which are not of their interest or do not fall in the category of manuscripts accepted by them for publication. Hence these are not accepted for external review and further processing. She was of the view that communication is important in research publications so that authors should know it and avoid those mistakes in future. It is important that authors should write clearly about the process in detail. Editors should inform the authors what topics are of interest to them and what type of articles they will accept and prefer.

She then discussed the different stages of peer review. Acceptance of manuscript, she said, is the dream of every author. Speaking about the Editor's triage of papers, she talked about complete rubbish or presentable rubbish. Editors are decision makers and not reviewers. At times despite good review, papers are rejected by the Editors. You get rejected but even then you get published because it is the Editors who make the decisions. There are problems with re-

viewers who will sometime say that Yes it is good for small journals like you. Speaking about how Editors triage papers, Prof. Ana Marusic said that about 30% of papers accepted after initial screening are then sent out for external review and the Editor end up making many enemies. In case your journal is covered in Medline or has Impact Factor, you have more submissions which add to your problems. Triage means that if it is an RCT, was it really randomized. If not reject the manuscript unless you find a good reason for not randomization.

RCTs Prof. Ana Marusic said are considered the best papers. See how randomization was done. Is it compared blindly which is a gold standard? In prognosis studies, see is it a cohort patient who was followed prospectively. In Systematic Reviews see was the question asked clearly? Was the search described and was the quality criteria set? In qualitative research see whether the method was described in detail? Is the methodology valid? In case of Case Report, see it is not so common. It should not be so rare but it should be a good read. Most case reports are rejected unless they are really interesting. Prevalence studies have limited usefulness. Cost of illness studies are rarely interesting enough but it is hard to generalize. Most of the leading journals like Lancet and BMJ have an acceptance rate of between 7-10%.

Speaking about editorial policies, she pointed out that Editors are not obliged to provide contents or reviews for legal proceedings. Reviewers should know confidentiality. Editors should not disclose the reviewers comments except to authors. Comments should not be published or publicized without permission of the reviewer. Sometimes reviewers become authors by helping to revise the manuscript. Every journal should have a declared mechanism for authors to appeal against editorial decisions. Reviewer's database should be updated periodically. Do not go for visuals but look at contents. Avoid using colours but prefer black and white for various reasons including economic reasons as colour printing is very expensive, she remarked.

Concluding Session

Speaking in the concluding session **Seyed Mehdi Seyedi** Dean of Science and Research and Vice President for Science and Technology at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences commended the efforts of organizers and hoped that the participants got what they wished during the conference deliberations. He emphasized the importance of helping each other and improvement of quality of manuscripts accepted for publication. Dr. Ali Akbari Sari said that it was a wonderful conference, very informative which provided all of us an opportunity to share our knowledge and experience.