

PUBLICATION AUDIT, SELF ANALYSIS FOR THE YEAR 2005 AND REVISED PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

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The commencement of 2006 provides us an opportunity to look back and do some self analysis. While we continue to face some economic difficulties in view of the increasing cost of production besides limited number of reviewers in our data base, there have been some positive developments as well.

The total number of manuscripts received for publication in 2005 were two hundred twenty (220) as against one hundred forty (140) during 2004 which shows an increase of 57%. The number of manuscripts received from overseas during 2005 was 133 as against 62 during 2004 again showing an increase of 115%. Table-I.¹ The number of manuscripts received from within Pakistan also registered an increase from 78 in Year 2004 to 87 in the Year 2005.

All this shows the interest and confidence of the authors in Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences. Number of manuscripts being received from overseas for the last few years ever since the start of Online Edition in 2001 (www.pjms.com.pk) has registered sharp increase which indicates that we are on the right path and on our way to realize our dream to make Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences one of the leading peer reviewed medical journals from this part of the world. We would also like to mention the steady increase in the number of manuscripts being received from our brotherly neighbouring Muslim country Islamic Republic of Iran in particular. During 2003 we received 13 manuscripts which increased to 21 and 74 during 2004 and 2005 respectively. Similarly the number of manuscripts published from overseas in 2004 were 36 which increased to 60 in Year 2005 showing an increase of almost 100%. On third

(20%) of these manuscripts published from overseas were from Iran alone.

Despite our earnest desire, financial difficulties and inadequate technical staff do not permit us to increase the frequency of publication making it a bimonthly from Quarterly publication for the time being. In view of the

Table-I: Overseas manuscript received during 2003 - 2005

Name of Country	2003	2004	2005
Bangladesh	02	04	03
Canada	-	01	03
Cameroon	-	-	01
India	-	02	09
Iran	13	21	74
Iraq	-	-	02
Ireland	-	01	01
Jordan	04	04	08
Kuwait	-	01	02
Lebanon	-	01	-
Nepal	01	01	01
Nigeria	01	02	07
Palestine	-	02	01
Poland	01	01	01
Qatar	-	-	01
Saudi Arabia	07	09	10
Thailand	-	01	01
Tunisia	01	02	-
Turkey	06	05	02
UAE	01	01	-
U.K.	-	01	05
USA	-	02	01
Total	37	62	133

large number of manuscripts being received and limited reviewer's data base, there have been some delays in reviewing the manuscripts for which we thank our contributors for their patience. However, this issue is being resolved and from January 2006 we have decided to increase our Reviewers Data base inducting many more reviewers in different disciplines of medicine from within the country and over-

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seas. Start of online review of manuscripts which has been initiated will be enlarged gradually and all these measures hopefully will reduce the time of peer review.

A vast majority of the manuscripts received for publication most often suffer from many deficiencies since the authors neither read instructions to authors nor follow them carefully. Had they done so, it would have come as a great relief for the Editorial team as well as reviewer's thereby ensuring quick review. Since we can accommodate only about 100-150 manuscripts in a Year, we have revised the publication policy starting from January 2006. Its salient features are as under:

1. We will strictly follow the maximum length permitted for manuscripts which is a total word count of 2200 for original manuscripts, 1500 words count for Case Reports, Short Communications and 3000 words for a Review Article. This will enable us to accommodate more manuscripts.
2. Original manuscripts, prospective studies will always get preference and they will be accommodated on priority basis after they have been approved after peer review. Only one review article may be accommodated in each issue.
3. Animal, experimental studies with no clinical relevance will not be entertained.
4. Clinical studies will get preference over basic science manuscripts. However, a few basic science manuscripts will be included in each issue.
5. Once the manuscript has been approved after peer review, publication date will be communicated to the authors after receipt of publication charges. In view of financial constraints, only a few manuscripts will be accommodated on complimentary basis in each issue if the authors request for financial assistance.
6. The reviewers also grade the manuscripts as A, B, and C besides suggesting whether the manuscript needs immediate publication or should be followed in routine and can wait publication. In view of this, some of the manuscripts received may be accommodated early after peer review while waiting period for others may be a bit longer.
7. Those manuscripts which also require correction of English language may take additional time during editing hence their publication may also be delayed to some extent.
8. Original epidemiological studies may be processed on priority basis thereby making it possible to include them early.
9. In case the authors fail to return the manuscripts after proof reading in time, their publication will be withheld and they may be included in the subsequent issues.
10. Some authors fail to send the Letter of Undertaking confirming exclusive contribution of the manuscript to Pak J Med Sci and willingness to pay the publication charges once the manuscript is approved after peer review. The processing of all such manuscripts will start only after the receipt of this Letter of Undertaking.
11. In some cases one author submits two or three manuscripts simultaneously. Only one manuscript will be included in one issue once it is approved after peer review. Other manuscripts will be processed simultaneously but the authors may have to wait for publication of remaining manuscripts a bit longer.
12. Efforts will be made to ensure that manuscripts accepted for publication has a fairly broad based representation from different countries rather than accommodating too many manuscripts from one country in each issue of the journal.
13. The authors must ensure that the original studies have been approved by their Institutional, Regional Ethics Committees. An approval letter should be enclosed with the manuscript. In case no such institutional, regional ethics committee, board exists, it must be made clear.
14. It is also essential that the authors disclose if they have any conflict of interest besides source of funding.
15. Henceforth names of those included in the Reviewer's Database will appear on the net in the Online Edition while they will be included in the October-December issue of each year in the printed version as an acknowledgment.

REFERENCE

1. Jawaaid SA and Jawaaid M. Publication Audit and the importance of Online Medical Journals. Pak J Med Sci 2005; 21(1): 6-9.