

NEED FOR INSTITUTIONAL MEDICAL RESEARCH JOURNALS

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Since World War II the commercialization value of medical research became realized. President Roosevelt of USA asked Vannevar Bush, Director R & D for a Report to move forward in the field. Science, The Endless Frontier - Summary of Report¹ – How do we increase scientific capital? First, we must have **plenty of men and women trained in science**, for upon them depends both the creation of new knowledge and its application to practical purposes. Second, we must **strengthen the centers of basic research which are principally the colleges, universities, and research institutes**. These institutions provide the environment which is most conducive to the creation of new scientific knowledge and least under pressure for immediate, tangible results.

The report also included the importance of research in biological and medical sciences. Universities were encouraged to promote the research by providing them with funding to be utilized by its faculty and researchers. The paradigm shift of post-Flexner era towards excellence in medical education had completely overwhelmed the medical faculty including the clinicians. However after the preferential accord to research by the same faculty, medical schools and hospitals shifted their focus to research and also generation of funds through private practice. Faculty priorities in research were obviously reflected in the publications and exponential growth of number of research journals. One can compare the 238 journals indexed in Pubmed (then MEDLINE) in 1971 as compared to 5,500 in 2011.² Increase in usage of online article retrieval per annum can be estimated by looking at the figures between 2010-2011 which was 0.2 billion.² On average

there were 3 million hits per day on Pubmed in 2013.³ Worldwide the promotion of institutionalized journals became the common practice. The publication quality was also taken into account resulting into a number of accreditation processes. The original researches obviously took higher credit as compared to any other. Regarding the medical educational institutions, the credit and promotion were attached / linked to the number of publication in the faculty.

Regarding medical journalism, The Lancet was first published in 1823,⁴ followed by BMJ in 1840 and JAMA in 1883.⁵ Pakistan at its inception in 1947 had no medical research journal. The first of its kind to be introduced was Journal of Pakistan Medical Association (JPMA) published in 1951.⁴ However it took nearly 24 years when JPMA was in Index Medicus. The number of journals listed in Pakmedinet is 78, out of which 61 are accredited by the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC) and 39 by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan.⁶ There are at the moment only 06 medical journals from Pakistan indexed in Medline.⁷ However the Impact Factors of three indexed medical journals from Pakistan range from 0.231 to 0.414., while the other three are not mentioned in ISI Impact Factor list 2014.⁸

Research publications have grown by 54% from year 2008 to 2012.⁹ Because of increased research interest related to increased postgraduate programs in medical universities, the pressure on existing medical journals has also grown leading to long waiting queues for publication. The online submissions to journals has created further difficulty where the novice writer does not have an off the record chance to

reform his manuscript. The institutions having their own journals do have the capacity in the form of relevant human resource, who in addition to improving the capacity building of medical writing, motivate their institutional colleagues. The statistical and bibliographic help that is ever so important in write-up may also be available readily. In case of submission to the journals outside institutions, researchers in Pakistan may also face high rejection or deferral rate.

Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) was commissioned in 2002 as a Cardiac Care oriented hospital but soon developed into a general tertiary care hospital and by now has further grown to develop a second tertiary care hospital and five academic undergraduate institutions including Rehman Medical College (RMC), in addition to training the postgraduates. In recent years, a large number of publications from its faculty have appeared in medical research journals. This growth has had a significant support by the well-developed Department of Medical Research at RMC. A large number of projects are in progress and therefore the need to publish a journal of its own by the name of Journal of RMI was felt for which due declaration has been accorded by the relevant department of Govt. of Pakistan.

The author's previous experience of being the pioneer editor of three notable journals including

one indexed journal 'Journal of Ayub Medical College' (J Ayub Med Coll Abbottabad) encouraged him to develop a team and launch the present journal with its aspirations and expectations of producing quality publications regularly disseminating the researches submitted from all over the globe rather than just locally.

Launching a new journal is no piece of cake and needs burning of midnight oil. It requires a dedicated team with expertise in management, manuscript screening, statistical review, bibliographical checks and above all, ethical compliance. The responsibility of quality assurance remains the biggest challenge. It is strongly felt that the institutions aspiring to publish their research journals must invest on developing a strong research department that can generate the substantive number of quality projects. The time to come shall testify whether the journal persists or perishes.

Recently this institution has published a Journal of Medical Students which is online and has received significant appreciation from different quarters that was encouraging for the present journal publication.

The author is extremely indebted to the managing editor who has remained his associate in two other journals and the editorial team to mature this peer reviewed open access journal.

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