

Medical writing as a discipline is not established yet in Pakistan. Many contributors write scientific papers as an obligation for their promotion. Research is almost non-existent in the medical field. Since the creation of medical universities, Higher Education Commission has made it mandatory for the faculty members, to conduct research and re-defined the criteria for promotion. This resulted in a flash flood of articles that are submitted to various medical journals for fast track publication. This boom definitely, will help none.

Editors of various medical journals are now faced with a dilemma of handling such a large number of articles with a very little pool of truly wise reviewers. Editors of the most of the medical journals are not properly trained to take up the task of medical editing. Majority had no job training in this field. To solve the issue medical journals have prepared structured proformas to help reviewers and as well as junior editors in manuscript assessment. This guides them as to what is expected in carrying out this task.

Review in itself is a painstaking job. Reviewers are expected to give comments on quality of the research and they should not bring their personal bias into it. Many journals are now adopting open review policy where identity and affiliation of authors are not blinded. This increases the burden of responsibility on the part of reviewers. But after all this exercise, question is asked whether peer review brings substantial change in quality of manuscript. Opinion about this varies. To some it is just a fruitless exercise while others find it useful. This pattern is continuing, so journals adhere to the policy of peer review.

Pakistan Medical Journalist Association, realizing need of training reviewers and junior editors, has started a task of conducting series of workshops in various cities of Pakistan. First such workshop was held at National Institute of Child Health Karachi in June 2008. It was well received. Many reviewers, editors and authors participated in a day long activity, supervised by senior editors of Pakistani journals. This is expected to bring a positive change in the quality of review from a pool of well trained group.

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