

An Audit of Articles Published in Year 2008

Journal of Surgery Pakistan (JSP) has published number of articles during the year 2008, majority being the original research. Other categories included Clinical Practice Articles, Evidence Based Reports, Short Articles, Case Series, Case Reports etc. This diversity is what desired by editorial board. This reflects out of box thinking on the part of authors and broadening of thinking horizon that remained tunneled to original articles and case report categories only. This paradigm shift probably is an outcome of globalization where international journals encourage authors to deliberate on variety of issues in clinical and research fields. This change is also due to the policy of some reputable national journals that discourage every odd article to be categorized under the heading of original article.

At JSP the rejection rate of articles was around 25%. Majority did not find place as the manuscript did not comply with JSP format. Authors are therefore advised to learn at least basic minimum of submission of research to any scientific journal. Many workshops are conducted to address this area. An initiative has been taken up by Pakistan Medical Journalist Association to address this deficiency. It runs regular workshops in different cities of Pakistan on medical writing, peer review and editing. It is worth attending as there is lot to learn for a receptive participant.

JSP has confronted many other issues, authorship being most disappointing. Authorship criterion has been clearly mentioned for any research. Only those who have made intellectual contribution to the study and its write up, fall into this category. However absolute disregard is observed in this area. How dishonest a person can be if he mentions name of an individual just for the sake of adding number of publication against his name. This year one article on subject of Burns from plastic surgical department of a medical university was received where second author was a gynecologist. All authors have signed letter of undertaking that they have contributed to the research. This issue was also raised in print media. Number of journals accept such papers and this made them party to the problem. It is therefore the responsibility of editors to comply with universal code of authorship. In doing so they will contribute to ethical practices in the field of medical journalism. Otherwise all odd articles will find place in journals as original research with diverse authorship and journal will flourish as authors pay for publication charges. Both parties are getting equally benefited but at the cost of promotion of an incompetent person for a faculty post that he does not deserve. Ethics should be at the heart of every act that we commit.

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