

Quality of Pakistani medical journals and their accessibility to undergraduate students

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Dear Madam, Throughout the years, there has been an enormous improvement in medicinal sciences particularly in medical research. In the seventeenth century, idea of the medical periodicals was presented for authentic and most recent medical researches. Historically, the world's first medical journal was introduced in January 1665 (The French *Le Journal des Scavans*). In Pakistan, the first journal debuted in 1953, when first issue of JPMA was published. Almost seven decades later, there are now more than 100 journals published in Pakistan. But unfortunately, the quality of these journals is still an unavoidable issue, albeit research culture is growing day by day in Pakistan as well as globally acting as a backbone of medical education. Let's talk about the quality of these journals, By doing a broad electronic-based hunt utilizing LOCATERPLUS, I discovered that there are only 5 Pakistani medical journals which are listed in MEDLINE (these are 1. Journal of Ayub Medical College 2. Journal of the College of Physicians and Surgeons 3. The Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association. 4. Pakistan journal of biological sciences 5. Pakistan journal of pharmaceutical sciences).¹ As per a report, more than 10000 MBBS students are graduated each year in Pakistan. So, virtually we can say, a standard journal to students' ratio is approximately 1:2000. Keeping in mind these journals are not only for students but open for all medical professionals and most of the articles published in them are written by experienced specialist doctors. If we contrast these figures with our neighbouring nations, in India 42 journals are indexed in MEDLINE, which roughly gives a ratio of 1:720.^{1,2} Similarly, Iran has 13 MEDLINE indexed journals and journal to student ratio is 1:308.^{1,3} In Bangladesh, this ratio is about 1:4770.¹ China also has 78 MEDLINE indexed journals. So we can infer that these figures are extremely poor and require a great deal of exertion in expanding the quality and amount of medical periodicals.

In Pakistan, the PMDC (now Pakistan Medical Commission)

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and the HEC are two autonomous administrative bodies responsible to screen and encourage nature of medical research journals. Quality affirmation division of these offices has elevated advanced education in Pakistan by embracing global gauges in the assessment of the postgraduate institutions and acquiring brilliance in education and research. At present, there are 35 HEC recognized medical journals present in Pakistan, while 60 journals are perceived by PMDC.⁴ Articles written in these journals are acknowledged by national establishments. However, there are serious concerns regarding the quality of these journals and their accreditation by universal organizations. At NHS IMT recruitment website, it is clearly stated that only PubMed cited original publications will have weightage in their residency programme.⁵ Therefore, we can reason that HEC and PMDC recognized journals which are not filed on PubMed have no worth abroad. This can have serious repercussions for health professionals having graduated from Pakistani institutions seeking higher foreign trainings in their specialties. It is, therefore, a collective duty of the institutions, journals, HEC and PMDC to energize such a situation which could yield quality researches and publications, which could prompt top notch medical periodicals with great impact factor. Also, presence of student corner should be made obligatory for all journals.

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