

JPMI - A JOURNEY OF TWENTY FIVE YEARS: IT IS JUST THE BEGINNING...

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Postgraduate Medical Institute (PGMI) was established in August 1984. Sadly both the founders, Dean Professor Jamil Ahmed and Governor General Fazal Haq who must be credited with the vision and its implementation of first PGMI in the province, are not amongst us today. However, their vision of creating a PGMI as centre of excellence for postgraduate training in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been realized. JPMI and its progress over the last 25 years is a living testimony to that.

“The main aim of publishing this journal is to establish a forum through which the scientific work being done in our medical institutions is highlighted and brought to the knowledge of our colleagues in the medical profession. We will always keep the research element alive in our publications so as to add at least few drops to the main stream of medical knowledge for the ultimate welfare and benefit of mankind”¹ wrote the first chief editor of the journal, Sahibzada Muhammad Anwar (late), a renowned chest specialist of Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar. It is remarkable that he established JPMI with hardly any training in the field of medical publishing. He carried the flag for 7 years and continued to serve the journal even after his retirement from government service and laid a firm foundation for the journal. Initially in the absence of much research being conducted in the province due to resource constraints, it was only possible to publish the journal with articles mainly contributed by the faculty of PGMI.

A young senior registrar in Cardiology then took over the journal in 1993 and elaborated his vision of research and medical writing as “The bondage between the past and future is anchored in the present. Blessed are the people, who while living in the present, offer insights in to the future and deduce lessons from the past through their organized work which undoubtedly require untiring efforts. Research is nothing but an organized effort in an attempt to answer a specific question”². Mohammad Hafizullah, now Professor and Vice Chancellor of Khyber Medical University served as its Editor in Chief for over 16 years and during this period JPMI made tremendous progress. From an annual, it became a biannual journal in 1993 and subsequently a quarterly in 2004. It was included in “Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)”, and was issued an ISSN in the year 2003. Later it was indexed with WHO-IMEMER, Index Copernicus and EMBASE.

When accreditation process of Pakistan medical and Dental Council (PMDC) for medical journals started, JPMI obtained the recognition it duly deserved. JPMI also contributed to the training in research, medical writing and other Continuing Medical Education programme. During this time, the number of manuscripts submitted for publication in JPMI increased significantly. This was partly due to the incentive attached with publication for promotion and initial recruitment to the faculty positions, a shrewd move by the planners and policy makers. A citation analysis of scientific journals from Pakistan in 2008 declared JPMI among the top 4 journals of Pakistan³. Undoubtedly, the sheer hard work of its Editorial Board during this period paid rich dividends for the journal and PGMI in coming years.

When I took over the responsibility of the journal in 2009, the excellent support of editorial board and untiring efforts of our Managing Editor, Dr.

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Muhammad Irfan, made the task much easier. The task was to raise the journal to international standards of medical journalism, ethics and rigorous peer reviewing. Dr. Akhtar Sherin who served as executive editor from 2002-2009 and still is a member of the editorial board; also contributed very significantly to the JPMI. It is not only the dedication but the efforts of both the above mentioned, in developing themselves in the field of Medical journalism that is

responsible for the steady progress of JPMI in the right lines of becoming an international level Medline journal.

I believe that the JPMI has to play much wider role in a setting where unfortunately medical writing and research are amongst the low priorities. Publishing the journal regularly and accepting the articles which are mostly submitted to meet the requirements for promotion is not the role a scientific journal in a developing country can be contented with. Beside stringent peer reviewing by independent reviewers from within and outside the country, issues of professionalism, plagiarism, editorship, authorship, visibility, indexing, professional development of the editors and continuing medical education of the faculty are the areas any progressive journal need to address in order to keep pace with the growing standards of today^{4,5}.

JPMI is now an established entity in the institution of PGMI having a purpose built, well equipped and dedicated office with full time assistant, Managing Editor, bibliographer, dedicated editorial board with members from the faculty of PGMI as well as active members from within and outside the country. A large group of leading experts help in the peer reviewing of the manuscripts submitted for publications. In pursuit of improving the standard of its publications, peer reviewing has further been intensified by getting the manuscripts reviewed by both national and international reviewers. Though this has improved the quality of JPMI publications and attracted manuscripts from across the globe but resulted in a very high rejection rate. The regular features of the journal are now changed in content and format. Editorials are written on invitation by the authorities in their respective fields, and not by the chief editor only.

Regular monthly editorial board meetings not only discuss the editorial issues but also provide opportunities for professional development to editors through presentations by a member on Research Methodology/Medical journalism. The international visibility of the journal has been further enhanced. It is now indexed and abstracted in EMBASE/Excerpta Medica Netherlands, WHO IMEMR Current Contents, Index Copernicus Poland, SCOPUS, CAB Abstract and Global Health UK; Registered with International Serials Data System of France; Recognized by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan; Approved by Pakistan Medical & Dental Council; Member of Committee on Publication Ethics; and Covered by Pakmedinet, Open-J gate India, Directory of Open Access Journals, Google Scholar and ISC index Iran⁶.

The development of the state of the art website (www.jpmi.org.pk) of JPMI has been another milestone. Although JPMI had a website since 2003 but keeping with the modern trends in information technology, the website was re-designed and the text of the all the published issues of last 25 years of publications of JPMI was uploaded after collecting these from the record of JPMI and various libraries. Now all the material of the last 25 years is available free, full text on the dynamic website to promote the concept of open access journalism.

JPMI will shortly be truly an online journal like any leading international journal by adopting a journal website management and publishing system which will improve the record-keeping and efficiency of editorial processes⁷. This new system will greatly facilitate the authors and reviewers; and the authors will be able to track the progress of their submitted manuscript by logging in to the website. It will pave way for the open and transparent journalism.

The quality assurance wing Higher Education commission (HEC) in 2009 graded JPMI in “Y” category along with many other journals of the country. But recognizing the tremendous progress that JPMI has made since then, it has been promoted to the “X” grade along with only one other journal of the country i.e. JPMA⁸. Out of the 32 accredited medical journals, JPMI has been declared joint 2nd best peer reviewed journal of Pakistan, which is a testimony to the relentless and persistent hard work of its editorial board and the support by the Deanery of PGMI. JPMI now has all the ingredients to be indexed in the PubMed and become an impact factor journal. We have started working to get JPMI a status of Medline journal.

JPMI and its parent institution have come a long way in 25 years during a period which has unfortunately been characterized by perhaps the worst violence anywhere in the world. Its standing amongst the scientific journals in Pakistan and internationally, speaks volumes about the resilience and passion of our editorial team and the faculty for marinating a scientific discourse. This resilience and scientific spirit will be our greatest assets for future journey to take a rightful place among the top international medical journals.

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