

Effectiveness of full time editors

*Dr. Ahmed Badar * M.Phil, FCPS*

Job of a medical journal editor is not an easy job. An editor is not just a gatekeeper who receives manuscripts, sends them for review, manages corrections etc, but he or she is also supposed to be a facilitator, trainer and most importantly 'available'.

Most of the medical article authors are not good in medical writing. Many original works of significance are lost due to bad medical writing. Many quality works are rejected due to very poor medical writing. Many classical studies are delayed due to not following of author guidelines. Most of the authors do not know about proper use of author guidelines or "uniform Requirements". They go on plagiarizing in introduction and discussion, writing irrelevant methods, highlighting least important results, presenting results without statistical tests, duplicating results in text and non text forms, using only "for" studies in discussion, drawing conclusions not based on study or generalizing results to population not studied.

Many editors think that improving an article is job of author only. My opinion is this that many authors get discouraged by this attitude. I have closely scrutinized working of many successful journals in Pakistan and abroad. Editors of all good quality journals guide and help the authors for corrections. This ensures printing of quality articles, returning of authors to the journal and therefore improvement in the impact and goodwill of the journal. This is possible only if the editor is "full time" or "available" at all the time.

Modern communication systems in form of mobile phones and email have made 'availability' very easy. One does not need to sit in a dedicated office all the time. If he or she is accessible to authors, reviewers, office staff, advertisers and printers by any of the communication mean round the clock, this means that this editor is a full time editor.

Journals keep on appearing and disappearing. Very few sustain, out of those who sustain very few maintain standard and out of these only few attain fame (in form of indexation and international recognition). In my humble opinion these very few are the ones who have full time editors.

* Managing Editor,
Pakistan Journal of Physiology, Dept.of Physiology, Ayub Medical College,
Abbottabad - Pakistan. Email: badarabbott@hotmail.com, abdar@gmail.com