

## **Conflict between Editors and Authors: A Dilemma**

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The relationship between editors of medical journals and authors are not enjoying one to one relation. There is a power differential that gives editors a leading role and editors even if not expressed verbally do implicitly enjoy supremacy over authors. Authors are main pillar upon which a journal stands but even then rights of the authors are not defined explicitly. Thus when a conflict arises between an editor and author no objectively defined process follows thus authors develop grudges against editors and on many occasion their response may be natural.

In JCPSP though no clearly defined policy is published on the subject but a process follows in case a conflict arises between contributors and editor's assessment. This presentation addressed this important issue. We analyzed responses of authors when a decision against the submitted article is taken by one of the editors and also assessed what were the issues behind such argument.

We first analyzed why authors were submitting articles to JCPSP. It was observed that majority were interested in getting their articles published under the category of original research. This is because all future promotions of contributors at their institutes were related to number of publications against their names. When the decision was conveyed to them as to change the category an immediate reaction is that it is not acceptable though rejection was not made.

Another issue of conflict was authorship criteria. Many studies carried names of authors having no connection with the subject, place of study and discipline to which they belong. This gift authorship annoyed many authors and conflict arose. The issue of salami slice was from those authors who belonged in most of the cases from university hospitals. After collecting data from a community they submitted multiple publications which could have been part of a single submission. The purpose here was again only

number of publications against their names. Some experimental studies without observing ethical issue and undertaken without permission of IRB / ERC was another area of conflict. Many authors failed to read instructions to the authors which lead to problems at later stage.

At JCPSP managing editor act as a neutral person. He addresses the conflict issue by getting opinion from different editors and then communicate with authors. In case there is a conflict between editors about the issue editorial board meeting then becomes the next forum. Authors are provided with elaborate reply addressing all the objections raised by them. Thus a fair opportunity exists as on many occasions author's point of view is also accepted.

In conclusion editors are there to help authors in publishing their results so as to disseminate knowledge. They teach and guide authors as to the principles of medical writing and publication ethics. Fear of Communication among editors and authors must be discussed up front thus allaying anxiety of authors. Journals on their websites must publish sample cases so that authors could learn. Editors also learn from such conflicts as it is a two way learning process.