

## **Profound effect of a new Medical Journal on teaching, training and specialty development**

*Anwar Ul Haque, Lubna Naseem  
Department of Pathology  
Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences  
Islamabad*

Launching and sustaining of Medical Journal is a very tedious task in the developing countries where the research atmosphere is missing, resources are scarce and motivation to do research is usually lacking. Therefore when we launched International Journal of Pathology (IJP), it proved to be a very daunting and challenging task. It was very difficult to get good research articles and it was very hard to get them reviewed and assessed quickly in time. As the time is flying, people are getting busier and very few have interest in something which is not financially rewarding!

Since we had taken this important task on our fragile shoulders we had to be engaged in constant motivational gear to grab every opportunity to get good case reports and original research articles. We had to be in constant motivational mode to not to leave any opportunity to motivate ourselves and our postgraduate students to undertake reporting interesting case reports and small simple research projects. As we conducted several interdepartmental conferences and workshops, we had ample opportunity to inspire ourselves and our as well as postgraduate students of other departments to engage in research activities. Of course we had to guide them on every step and to help them whenever they needed help and to closely follow up their progress. We also held several annual symposia of the hospital and the conferences of various specialties in order to create ample opportunities to motivate our postgraduate residents to actively participate in those and carry out original studies.

There were some deficiencies in our curricula, teaching strategies and significant underdevelopment of some specialties which required tremendous efforts to bring them at par with international standards. We got actively engaged in improving these specialties with an eye to get good

useful research to generate important papers for IJP. We worked hard on Transfusion Medicine and began first ever postgraduate M. Phil training program in this specialty in a public sector hospital in Pakistan. There was quite rudimentary understanding of optimal utilization of blood and its products among fellow physicians and few understood the risks associated with it. For this purpose we had to undertake several original studies in our Blood Bank. We also focused on improvement in better infection control, patient and health care workers safety and improving quality and depth of education at all levels i.e. public, paramedical staff, postgraduate doctors and even consultants. The blood bank saw substantial improvement in terms of better and most optimal utilization of blood and its products, pre-donation testing helped significantly reducing the overall burden of infected blood in the Blood bank. Double testing of the blood helped in strengthening the safety of the blood product for the donors. Better education of the doctors resulted in marked reduction in unnecessary infusion of blood products and plasma for nutrition purposes. Platelets consumption for Dengue fever was made most optimal eliminating unnecessary panic situations due to gross misunderstanding.<sup>1</sup>

As result of our sustained efforts we were able to generate a large number of very unique and interesting case reports, original research articles, thought provoking editorials and review articles addressing social, ethical and moral issues in addition to usual medical issues.<sup>2-3</sup>

Our residents were groomed in writing case reports, carrying out original research, better presentations, developed better teaching skills etc. As a result of our sustained and continuous efforts International Journal of Pathology (IJP) brought articles with very novel concepts such as Lymphoma in Situ in Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Giant cell Tumor; a non neoplastic lesion, role of intratumoral hemorrhages in expansion of shwannoma etc.<sup>4</sup> We carried out nuclear morphometry in gastric carcinoma and highlighted important nuclear features of malignancy at oil immersion microscopy which could be of tremendous value in small gastric biopsies.<sup>4</sup> We presented several animal studies such as Sprague – Dawley rat as good model of human Overwhelming postsplenectomy septicemia<sup>5</sup> and effects of various hormones on rat testes. We also highlighted severe deficiencies and irrelevancies in our pre-medical and medical curricula.<sup>6</sup> Despite serious deficiencies in Electron microscopy in Pakistan we were able to attract papers on Electron Microscopic observations in lymphoma and in so called fetal Rhabdomyoma. We proved through our immuno and electron microscopic findings that Fetal Rhabdomyoma is in fact a benign tumor of collagen

origin (Circumscribed Fibraomatosis) rather than of a true skeletal muscle origin.<sup>7</sup>

We reported quite interesting and rare case reports.<sup>8-9</sup> Snail infection to the best of our knowledge was the first ever reported case in the world literature.<sup>10</sup> In terms of techniques we carried out comparative studies of various types of needles in Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology.<sup>11</sup> The Cytology was vastly improved in our set up and numerous studies were carried out on touch preparation cytology, bone aspiration cytology and spleen FNAC etc.<sup>12</sup> How can we forget great contribution of great scientist and patrons of sciences and education who brought sciences to the modern level and helped in achieving high level of competency in medicine today. IJP therefore had regular features on History of Sciences.<sup>13-14</sup>

Infection control and Hospital waste management were also focused in IJP as these are essential ingredients of good hospital and laboratory services to the patients. Our infection Control Committee held various seminars, symposia and presentations in Grand Rounds of Medicine, Surgery and Pediatrics . This created good awareness among healthcare workers and imparted good training to nurses and other paramedical staff.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion IJP was instrumental in improving the overall standard of the department, research abilities and activities among postgraduate students. It tremendously boosted Transfusion Medicine in terms of optimal utilization of blood and its products, safety of the health care workers as well as of donors and their families and the recipients. It specifically led to commencement of first ever M. Phil postgraduate training program in Blood Banking.

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