

Recommendations by the National Conference on Medical Editing

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Recommendations of the Conference were presented by Dr.Maqbool H.Jafary in the concluding session on April 25th 2007. This session was presided by Lt.Gen.Mushtaq A.Baig, Surgeon General of Pakistan Army. The recommendations are as under:

1. The Menace of Duplicate Publications

- * To discourage duplicate publications, an agreement is necessary between the editors of the medical journals to support each other for the action taken against the offenders.
- * The editors should not accept manuscripts without the Letter of Undertaking (LOU), signed by all the authors. This undertaking should clearly highlight that a manuscript is exclusively being submitted to a specific journal.

2. Plagiarism

Editors should develop an understanding that plagiarism, if detected, will strongly be condemned and to take steps to weed it out. Editors should also share between them different software available to detect plagiarism.

3. Regional Index

It was suggested that we must strengthen the regional indexing systems and improve their credibility.

4. National Code of Publication Ethics

Editors of Pakistani Medical journals should develop a National Code of Publication Ethics, in line with the Code from Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

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5. Training of Editors/ Writers

- a) Majority of the journal editors have learnt the art of editing through on the job training. There is a need for formal training, especially for the new editors, through:
 - * Local interactions between editors
 - * National meetings
 - * International exposure through EMAME and WAME, with the support from WHO EMRO Region
- b) Collaborate with the institutions imparting training in the art of medical writing and training e.g., CPSP.
- c) Recommend the inclusion of the art of medical writing and research methodology in the curriculum of undergraduate medical students.

6. Uniform Requirements for Manuscript Submission

Like the major international journals and many regional and national journals, we in Pakistan should develop the uniform requirements for article submission for the guidance of authors.

7. Promotion of the Art of Medical Editing

- a) The editors need to enlist the continued patronage and financial support for the promotion, through training and meetings, from:
 - * Higher Education Commission (HEC)
 - * Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC)
 - * National University of Science and Technology (NUST)
 - * Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF)
 - * Ministry of Health (MoH) etc.
- b) Seek assistance from bodies like HEC to sponsor the delegates to conferences organized by EMAME to participate and present papers.

8. Membership of Professional Bodies

All editors, their staff and all those interested in the art of medical writing and editing should become members of professional bodies like:

- * Pakistan Medical Journalists Association (PMJA)
- * Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors (EMAME)
- * World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)

There is strength in numbers and wisdom in collective thinking. Their websites are great source of information and training. More use of these websites needs to be made.

9. Recognition of Biomedical Journals

A National Committee under the auspices of PMDC or HEC should be formed for evaluation and recognition of Biomedical Journals published in Pakistan. The Committee should comprise of representatives from PM&DC, HEC, CPSP, PMJA, MoH, Academic institutions like KEMU, AKU, DUHS, LUMHS etc. The Committee should recognize only those journals which meet the following criteria:

- * The journals which are published regularly as per official declaration.
- * The journals who practice peer review system
- * The journals which are covered by, at least one of the major indexing services, like EMBASE, Medline, Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) by Thompson/ISI etc.
- * For the newly published journals, only those with sustained publication for at least two years, according to their declared schedule of publication, should be eligible for recognition.

The list of recognized biomedical journals should be reviewed and updated every two years according to laid down criteria. Those journals failing to meet these criteria should be de-listed.