

Editor's Note

IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE

In order to benefit from the collective wisdom of the members of the Editorial Board another meeting of the members from Lahore, Rawalpindi-Islamabad and Multan was held at Fatima Jinnah Medical College on September 28th 2002. Dr. Maqbool H. Jafary Chief Editor and Chairman of the Editorial Board presided. Those who were present included Dr. Maqbool H. Jafary, Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawaid, Prof. Akbar Chaudhry, Prof. Tahir Saeed Haroon, Prof. M. Aslam from Rawalpindi, Prof. M. Naeem Khan from Islamabad, Dr. Mohyuddin Chaudhry and Dr. Tehsin from Multan, Prof. Javed Akram, Prof. Abdul Majeed Chaudhry, Prof. Ijaz Haider, Prof. Saad B. Malik, Prof. Saeedul Haque Chaudhry, Dr. Mahfooz ur Rehman, Dr. Mohammed Yousuf, Prof. Salik, Dr. M. Rehan and Dr. S. N. H. Bokhari.

Welcoming the participants to the meeting Dr. Jafary said that this is an on-going process of discussion, consultations with the members of the Editorial Board, which is aimed at further improving the quality of manuscripts being published thereby improving the standard of the journal. Every effort will be made to benefit from their suggestions. He also reminded them that at the last meeting it was agreed that the members of the Editorial Board will themselves contribute to the journal regularly. While some of the members have kept up this promise, others still need to fulfill this commitment. The meeting had in depth discussions and also reviewed the progress of the journal since the last meeting.

As regards the current status of the Journal an effort is being made to improve and expand the contents. Some of the suggestions put forward by the members earlier like expanding the contents by introducing new sections i.e.

Family Practice, Short Communication, Letters to the Editor, Proceedings, Continuing Medical Education Write-ups, Updates on important topics of current interest, Comprehensive Reviews, inclusion of E-mail address of corresponding authors to facilitate easy communication have been implemented while work on many others was still going on and hopefully they will be implemented soon. Financial constraints are the major hurdle. We are in constant touch with authorities at Index Medicus in National Library of Medicine at Bethesda, USA as regards indexation and inclusion of Pak J Med Sci on the Medline and Index Medicus. The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council has now revised its earlier decision. They have done away with the categorization of the journals in A, B and C categories. Henceforth there will be only two lists of recognized and non-recognized journals. Ever since the start of Online Edition of Pak J Med Sci, the number of manuscripts being received from overseas has increased. This has also increased the readership and the authors whose manuscripts are published in the Journal now get much wider readership via Internet. The overall acceptance rate of the manuscripts remains at little above 50% even after revision and re-writing. It was agreed that efforts would be made to have a Statistician on the Editorial Board who could help the journal as regards statistical analysis of the manuscripts. Dr. N. Rehan Director PMRC Research Centre at FJMC/Ganga Ram Hospital Lahore who had reviewed a few manuscripts published in the last two issues gave some very useful suggestions. This will be helpful to rectify some of the mistakes in future.

Prof. Javed Akram suggested that the journal should have a section of Job

Opportunities. Prof. Saad B. Malik reiterated his earlier suggestion that the journal should have a regular feature on personal profiles of some eminent healthcare professionals. Dr. Mohyuddin Chaudhry felt that the reviewer's services must be appreciated and recognized. They should be issued some certificates which should be given some importance by bodies like PM&DC and Universities. Dr. Mahfooz ur Rehman felt that comments from the reviewers should be communicated to the writers to help them further improve their manuscripts. In fact the comments from the reviewers are always communicated to the writers when they are returned their manuscripts for revisions and re-writing. In future it is planned to communicate the comments from reviewers to other members of the Editorial Board as well. Some selected comments will also be presented in the Editorial Board meetings in future. Dr. Rehan said that pakmedinet.com contains a number of Pakistani medical journals and it was a useful source of local references. Prof. Tahir Saeed Haroon opined that since Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences was a national publication, we must have people from NWFP and Balochistan provinces on the Editorial Board. Moreover, there is a need to improve the representation of females in the Editorial Board.

Dr. Maqbool H. Jafary informed the participants that membership of the Editorial Board is continuously being reviewed. Apart from overseas members, we are trying to induct young, energetic, talented healthcare professionals who are interested in academics. Many of them are invited to the Editorial Board meetings as observers before they are finally selected. In future it has also been decided that membership of the editorial board will be for a period of three years which can be extended based on the contributions of the members.

We feel pleasure to inform our readers and contributors that from the current issue we have inducted a number of new members to the Editorial Board. They include Dr. Esfandiar Maram Head of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Division in Dept. of Community Health Sciences from Aga Khan University Karachi, Dr. N. Rehan Director PMRC Research Center at Fatima Jinnah Medical College/ Ganga Ram Hospital Lahore. Induction of both these eminent personalities we sincerely hope will go a long way to overcome some of the deficiencies that we have been facing as regards statistical analysis and evaluation of the manuscripts accepted for publication. It also fulfils yet another suggestion made in the Editorial Board meetings. We have also inducted some young talented people, which include Dr. Mahfooz Ur Rehman, a noted hematologist and additional director Institute of Hematology and Blood Transfusion Service Punjab, Prof. Masood Ahmad Khan, Prof. of Physiology from Women Medical College, Abbottabad, Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad Jan, Associate Professor and Head of Paediatric Surgery at National Institute of Child Health, Karachi and Dr. Zaffar Sajjad, Assistant Professor/Chief MRI from Ziauddin Medical University Karachi who is also clinical lecturer at Aga Khan University. Efforts are also on to include some more members from NWFP and Balochistan provinces.

Many important issues were raised by the participants during the workshops on peer review system organized by the Pakistan Medical Journalists Association at Karachi and Lahore. The detailed proceedings are being published in this issue. Some of the important observations made by many participants were that only quality manuscripts should be accepted for publication, if there is enough scientific data, the reviewers should not hesitate even to re-write the article and finally most of the participants were of the view that the Editors and Journals should be author friendly. We in Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences continuously strive to improve the quality of manuscripts, which are eventually accepted for publication. An attempt is always made to help, guide and assist the authors particularly those who are just beginning their academic career. We certainly do not want to discourage people but at times the quality of manuscripts is so poor that in order to maintain

minimum standards, they cannot be accepted. Even in this issue there are two manuscripts which otherwise wouldn't have merited acceptance but they have been accommodated. The first manuscript, the two case reports of rabies and vaccination failure¹ had quite a few deficiencies. It was accepted for inclusion as a short communication simply because it highlights an important public health issue. It is a well-known fact that improper storage conditions at the retail outlets and even in some healthcare facilities in the interior result in loss of potency of these vaccines. After exposure to rabies even vaccination with the low potency vaccines would not eliminate the chances of ultimate death of the patients. As usual with our patients, they did not remember the vaccine dose and the schedule of vaccination. The confirmation of protective antibody response in these vaccines is quite expensive. There is a need to develop some strategy to make this cost effective. Many precious lives are lost annually due to rabies and the decision to include this write-up was to highlight this issue, create awareness among the healthcare professionals and the health officials to come up with some remedial measures. An important write-up on guidelines on rabies vaccination will be accommodated in the next issue.

The second write-up is "Wide local excision and split skin graft for preauricular nodular basal cell carcinoma invading the Pinna".² The reviewers felt it was a routine procedure. Reconstruction, they opined should have been

tried. However it was also accommodated just to encourage the young writers so that they are motivated.

As suggested by the participants during the Editorial Board meeting, the managing committee has decided to institute a "Young Writers Award" which will carry a prize money of Rs.5,000/=. It will be given annually at the Editorial Board meeting. The terms of reference for this award are being finalized and will be announced shortly. We are trying our best to expand the contents so that it becomes a useful, informative publication for every healthcare professional. The members of the Board are most welcome to start contributing on all the different issues, which had come under discussion in the editorial board meeting as likely additions to the contents.

REFERENCES

1. Ahmad R, Orakzai S. Rabies and Vaccination failure: Two case reports. *Pak J Med Sci* 2002; 18(4):25-327.
2. Khan SSA and Masudul Haq M. Wide local excision and split skin graft for preauricular nodular basal cell carcinoma invading the Pinna. *Pak J Med Sci* 2002; 18(4):319-321.

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