Difficulties facing medical journals in developing countries

Mohamed ElMakki Ahmed MS, FRCSI

Editor in Chief

Sudan Medical Journal

Professor of surgery. University of Khartoum

Sudan

Background: Editing and publication of medical journals in developing nations is faced with several difficulties. Despite the abundance of research works for various academic and professional degrees on the shelves, submission to scientific journals is minimal since as it is not a pre requisite for granting the degree. Even the adoption of submission to scientific journals by some Board and Universities as a pre requisite for granting the degree was not successful.

Methods: Review all submissions to Sudan Medical Journal, the author’s background and response to reviewer’s comments. Review the frequency of publication of other local medical journals in Sudan. The scientific and linguistic weakness and efforts exerted by editors.

Results: The majority of submitted manuscripts were from MS and MD theses. Those manuscripts were not followed by corrections required by the referees as the candidate already got his or her Postgraduate Degree. There is obvious weakness in English language. The need for a professional scientific and English editors are beyond the financial ability of the journal. Moreover, some academic institutes and societies began launching their own periodicals with substandard level. Some specialized journals were also launched, however the majority could not keep the pace and regularity.

Conclusion: Publications must be a pre requisite for granting academic and professional degrees. Journals can foster regular workshops on scientific writing for potential authors and having access for English editing where WAME can help in this part. The development of various specialties and sub-specialties made a general periodical of less interest to the readers where they may find one article or non in their domain. Thus a general periodical
could widen its readers by review articles, general themes, and medical events, summaries of conferences and possibly related themes of interest to a wide group of related interest.