

Saudi Medical Journal for continuous improvement and operational excellence

Saudi Medical Journal welcomes the New Year with a new home. The new office facility offers more space to preserve and maintain the journal collections and to share more of the history and milestones of the journal. With renewed energy brought about by the new environment, we decided to review and revise our mission and vision statements. Employing our previously held values, we aim to disseminate accessible, useful, up-to-date medical information for healthcare professionals of various specialties and to promote research with clear clinical implications that enriches knowledge locally and internationally. As we relentlessly pursue growth, our long term view is to be recognized as the leading journal in biomedical publication in the region.

Last year was also the time for us to rigorously define our scope of publication. In the past, we have been receiving a lot of basic research articles. To maintain proper selection of such topics, the journal only considers research with clear clinical implications.

As the standard requirements must be continuously monitored and updated, the journal set word limits, illustrations, and references limits for original and review articles.

Highly aware of the digital age, we still value the print tangible form. To ensure fast and efficient printing and distribution of journals we moved to a new printing press. Also, an email blast was set up where the Table of Contents of each issue is sent electronically to our list of readers as soon as an issue is available online.

To increase visibility, Saudi Medical Journal has been added to the Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ). The aim of DOAJ is “to increase visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals thereby promoting their increased usage and impact.”¹

A most welcomed achievement last year was the launching of the First Phase of Website Development. The new look closely resembles the journal cover, and this new version offers improved security and more valuable information for authors, reviewers, and readers. It also provides useful links for related resources and has rich search functionalities including authors, titles, abstracts, index terms, and full text search. The topic collections page present articles published from 2000 forward according to specialities. We hope that this feature yields the best resource for readers looking for a

specific topic. This year we will embark on the second leg of the website development and we plan to add more features. We welcome comments and suggestions on our website: <http://smj.psmmc.med.sa>

One of the inherent problems of peer review is finding suitable reviewers. Many invited reviewers apologize due to busy schedules, topics not covering their speciality, or they may choose to not even respond. Reviewers play a very important role in the decision making of the editors and their contribution determines the quality of published papers. For that reason we are very keen to expand our network of active reviewers.

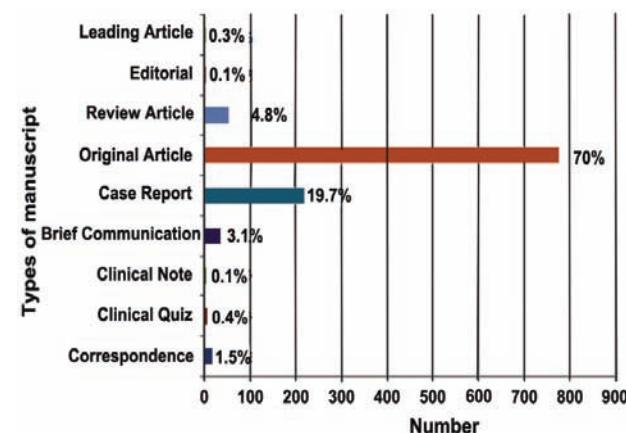


Figure 1 - Type of manuscripts received for the year 2013.

Table 1 - Articles published in Saudi Medical Journal for the year 2013.

Types of Articles	n	(%)
Editorials	3	1.5
Leading Article	1	0.5
Review Articles	13	6.6
Original Articles	124	62.9
Case Reports	27	13.7
Clinical Notes	3	1.5
Clinical Quiz	1	0.5
Brief Communication	16	8.1
Correspondence	5	2.5
Book Review	1	0.5
Errata Notices	3	1.5
Total	197	100

Table 2 - Origin of “peer-reviewed” articles published in Saudi Medical Journal for the year 2013.

Origin	n	(%)
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	120	(61.9)
<i>Gulf Countries</i>		
United Arab Emirates	1	(0.5)
Bahrain	2	(1.0)
<i>Arab Countries/Eastern Mediterranean Region</i>		
Egypt	4	(2.1)
Iraq	4	(2.1)
Jordan	3	(1.5)
Sudan	2	(1.0)
Syria	1	(0.5)
Iran	1	(0.5)
<i>Others</i>		
Turkey	14	(7.2)
United Kingdom	1	(0.5)
China	28	(14.4)
India	6	(3.1)
United States of America	2	(1.0)
Japan	1	(0.5)
Canada	2	(1.0)
Malaysia	2	(1.0)
Total	194	(100)

We now encourage authors to nominate potential reviewers. However, to avoid any bias, the author-suggested reviewer will only be considered for future submissions within that speciality. As manuscripts received become more interdisciplinary, more effort is being made in the review and revision of the scientific content. This is carried out with the great assistance of Dr. Hyveen Ramadan, as our new Assistant Scientific Editor. Her scope of duties involves the technical review and comprehensive editing of individual manuscripts. We hope that these initiatives will help to speed up the peer-review process, and improve the quality of articles published.

Annual statistics. This year we received 1110 averaging 92 manuscripts per month (Figure 1). Of these we published 1 Leading Article, 3 Editorials, 13 Review Articles, 124 Original Articles, 27 Case Reports, 16 Brief Communications and 5 Correspondence with a total of 1303 pages and a rejection rate of 80% (Table 1). We have a high rejection rate as it includes articles with plagiarism issues, and low scientific evidence. We are pleased at the diversity of the countries of origin of the articles submitted to SMJ. The number of articles includes only peer-reviewed articles (Table 2). The journal’s latest impact factor is 0.619. We will continue to strive to improve in this area with the help of our authors. In the coming year, we aim to publish more comprehensive review articles and papers focusing on topics of high current interest. We believe this approach will increase the citation performance of the journal.

Our strength lies in our highly qualified and dedicated editorial team. In the coming year, we hope to enlist the services of a dedicated statistician, a web developer and establish “on the job training” opportunities for new university graduates.

Saudi Medical Journal would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the invaluable contribution of our Board Members. We have invited new members to join us in the Editorial Board in addition to those who remain, and we hope that this will maintain the progress of the Journal. We also acknowledge our committed excellent reviewers. These individuals have raised the level of excellence that we wish to keep for the years to come.

Looking ahead. We are looking forward to starting the New Year with enthusiasm and commitment.

References

1. Directory of Open Access Journal. [accessed 27 November 2013]. Available from: <http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=loadTemplate&template=about&uiLanguage=en>

Ali AlBarrak, MD
Editor-in-Chief

Fahdah Alokaily, MD
Associate Editor