

Saudi Medical Journal reforms 2015

Development and progress is the goal of any successful institution. Saudi Medical Journal (SMJ) has always adopted new changes in order to facilitate the search for knowledge.

Beginning of 2015, the journal started assigning DOIs for the published articles. This served as a unique persistent identifier of all published content.

The journal welcomed submissions of Systematic Reviews. It is hoped that this new section will enrich the journal's content.

We have also announced the inclusion of articles in PubMed Central (PMC). Full text articles are made available in PDF, HTML and EPub formats. Another significant development is the indexing of SMJ in EBSCO. EBSCO is used by thousands of institutions worldwide with millions of end-users. With the recent indexing in these databases, we anticipate enhanced visibility and accessibility of our articles.

Few changes have been adopted to avoid unnecessary printing. As most turns to online reading, annual indexes will be available in the website.

In the past years, the journal has experienced problems with regard to: 1) authors withdrawing their submissions after peer review and revision; 2) authors withdrawing their manuscript after provisional acceptance and when they are in proof; and lastly authors with submissions under revision not responding to communication. We think that this is unethical and a waste of effort. To address the growing number of withdrawn cases, a policy for withdrawing manuscript was established. With this new policy, we expect the number of withdrawn cases to drop in the coming months ahead. Detailed information regarding the policy is included in the Instructions to Authors.

Our advocacy extends from publishing to continuous education. SMJ as a leading medical journal in the region, has carried out the responsibility of education in scientific publication, medical writing, and medical ethics, as well as educating the authors on how to avoid rejection. Thankfully, we managed to conduct the first course in November 2015 with great positive feedback from the attendees.

This is a year of several significant changes in the editorial team.

We would like to take this opportunity to honor Maj. Gen. Dr. Saeed M. Al-Asmary on his retirement. On

behalf of the editors and editorial team, we recognized with deepest appreciation all his support over the years. SMJ is privilege to work with such leaders like Dr. Al-Asmary.

After years of dedicated editorship, Ali AlBarrak stepped down as Editor-in-Chief to focus more on his responsibilities in the Ministry of Health. During his term, the journal had many significant advances. The journal joined COPE, obtained the DOI, and was indexed in PMC and Directory of Open Access (DOAJ). He has made several progresses in the editorial operations. He took charge in shaping the journal's image, and increasing the journal exposure at the national and international level. A visionary and a very hands-on leader, his leadership is fundamental to the journal's success.

Several of our Associate Editors have also ended their terms, Hesham Al-Khashan, Ahmed Al-Awwad, and Arwa Al-Sayed. We are grateful for their hard work and support over the years. With great sadness, we also bid farewell to one of the senior member, Assistant Editor Susan Douglas. Having worked for several years, she has been responsible for supervising the copy editing department.

On a positive note, we welcome the new Editorial Director Maj. Gen Suleiman M. Al-Malik. He is well regarded for his management skills and we look forward to SMJ benefitting highly from his expertise in the years ahead.

Stepping into the role as Editor-in-Chief is Fahdah Alokaily. She has been an Associate Editor of the journal over the years. Along with Maha Al-Mohaya as First Deputy Editor, we look forward to the journal's continued success.

Also, we would like to welcome on board the new Associate Editors Abdulrahman Al-Asmari, Ali Albenmoussa, Sultan Alzaaidi, and Adel Al-Harbi. Certainly, they will be a valuable addition to the team.

As we stack our board with essential experts, we also welcome the new Editorial Board members; Sabah Jastaneiah, Suzan Attar, Mohammad Arabi, Hanan Al-Kadri, Ahmed Fagih, and Basil Elnazir. We also like to acknowledge our previous board whose term ended this year; Mohammed Al-Omran, Huda Bukharie, Baker Dajani, Hamdi Shelleh, and Mostafa Youssef.

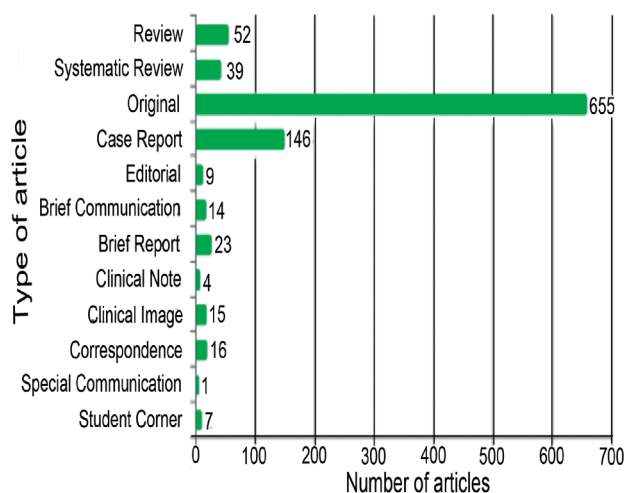


Figure 1 - Number and type of manuscripts processed for the year 2015.

We express our heartfelt thanks to our reviewers and authors for their continued support and commitment.

Annual Statistics. This year, we received 1220 manuscripts from which we processed 981 articles that have complied to the journal requirements (Figure 1). We have a high rejection rate of 69% as it includes articles that do not merit publication due to low scientific value, out of scope, and articles that have ethical issues. Peer review remains a great challenge in our editorial process. Of particular, were the low response of reviewers and lack of appropriate experts to review multidisciplinary studies. This therefore requires more effort from the reviewers and staff. SMJ is continuously striving to improve our processes to better serve our authors and reviewers and we look forward to overcoming this obstacle in the future.

This year, we published 246 articles with a total of 1509 pages (Table 1). Our average processing time is 5.3 months. The time from receipt of manuscript until its publication is one of the areas that we are always keen on improving. With the diversity of the countries of origin of the articles published in SMJ, we encourage more publication from other parts of the globe to expand the spectrum of authors, to increase dissemination of knowledge, and uphold the journal's international profile.

The journal's latest impact factor is 0.588. It has remained relatively steady over the last 5 years, however, based on SCImago Journal Rank our H index of 33 has remained consistent over the last 5 years in comparison with other local medical journals in the region

Table 1 - Origin of "peer-reviewed" articles published in Saudi Medical Journal for the year 2015.

Origin	n	(%)
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	145	(58.9)
<i>Gulf Countries</i>		
United Arab Emirates	3	(1.2)
Oman	2	(0.8)
Qatar	1	(0.4)
<i>Arab Countries/Eastern Mediterranean Region</i>		
Egypt	1	(0.4)
Iraq	7	(2.8)
Jordan	6	(2.4)
Libya	1	(0.4)
Iran	2	(0.8)
<i>Others</i>		
Sudan	1	(0.4)
Turkey	21	(8.5)
United Kingdom	3	(1.2)
China	25	(10.2)
India	2	(0.8)
Pakistan	2	(0.8)
Yemen	3	(1.2)
USA	3	(1.2)
Singapore	2	(0.8)
Nigeria	5	(2.0)
Malaysia	4	(1.6)
Canada	3	(1.2)
Greece	1	(0.4)
Sri Lanka	1	(0.4)
Croatia	1	(0.4)
Netherlands	1	(0.4)
Total	246	(100)

Table 2 - Saudi Medical Journal's impact factor and journal ranks for the last 5 years.

Year	Thomson ISI	SCImago Journal Rank Indicator	
		SJR	H index
2010	0.560	0.192	33
2011	0.520	0.215	33
2012	0.619	0.233	33
2013	0.554	0.239	33
2014	0.588	0.261	33

(Table 2). SCImago Journal Rank Indicator is a measure of journal's impact, influence or prestige. Although we believe that Impact Factor (IF) itself is not the absolute indicator to gauge the journal's performance, we shall take every effort to improve in this area to attract best quality articles of high interest and impact.

As another busy year beckons, we look forward to new opportunities and challenges with renewed enthusiasm and optimism.

Fahdah Alokaily, MD
Editor-in-Chief

Editorial Message

Our thanks also go to the reviewers who have participated in the excellent review of manuscripts and books for the year 2015.

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