

# Steps to Quality

The year 2010 is received with a lot of hope and ambition to pursue what we have achieved during 2009. Thus, we are looking forward to entering the new century with a tone of optimism. Saudi Medical Journal (SMJ) is recognized as one of the leading Journals in the region with high publicity because of its major role in publishing and assisting regional data to be published. This is taken as a huge responsibility, despite the fact that SMJ is changing its vision towards the number of publications each month to maintain high quality.

We have devoted a lot of time and effort to tackle and overcome ethical misconduct, and with the implementation of strict editorial policies we have minimized these cases significantly.

Focusing more on quality, we speeded up the manuscript processing time in 2009. We maintained a reasonably short turnover time from submission to acceptance, with an average of 2.3 months; and an average turnover time from acceptance to publication of 1.6 months (Table 1). The major influencing factor of this turnover time is the shorten review time given to reviewers from 4 weeks to 2 weeks.

The number of submitted manuscripts has also been on the rise with a 20% increase from that of 2008. This increase can be explained by our gradual switch from paper submission to electronic submission. Although, the SMJ Online Manuscript Submission (OMS) is still in its preliminary stage, we aim to continually improve

the system to speed up the manuscript processing. Unfortunately, out of all the submitted manuscripts, only 70% of the total submissions are processed immediately due to stricter policies and prerequisites we now require based on the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

We are proud that we are attracting papers from all over the world and our publication shows diversity of origin and we collaborate with authors and reviewers from all over the world, which maintained the international character of the journal. Table 2 shows the diversity in the countries of origin for the

**Table 2 -** Origin of articles published in Saudi Medical Journal for the year 2009.

Origin	N	(%)
<i>Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</i>	109	(33.1)
<i>Gulf Countries</i>		
Bahrain	4	(1.2)
Kuwait	4	(1.2)
Oman	6	(1.8)
Qatar	3	(0.9)
United Arab Emirates	5	(1.5)
<i>Arab Countries/Eastern Mediterranean Region</i>		
Egypt	3	(0.9)
Iraq	36	(10.9)
Jordan	15	(4.6)
Lebanon		
Libya	1	(0.3)
Sudan	2	(0.6)
Syria	1	(0.3)
Iran	35	(10.6)
Morocco		
Pakistan	3	(0.9)
Yemen	6	(1.8)
<i>Others</i>		
Belgium	1	(0.3)
Turkey	46	(14.0)
Canada	3	(0.9)
United Kingdom	1	(0.3)
Bulgaria	1	(0.3)
Italy	2	(0.6)
Nigeria	5	(1.5)
Japan	1	(0.3)
China	26	(7.9)
India	3	(0.9)
United States of America	3	(0.9)
Spain	1	(0.3)
Australia	1	(0.3)
Malaysia	2	(0.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>

**Table 1 -** Average processing time frame of original articles from received date, acceptance and publication for year 2009.

Months	Received to acceptance (months)	Acceptance to publication (months)	Received to publication (months)
January	3.5	1.0	4.5
February	3.6	1.4	5.0
March	3.5	1.5	5.0
April	3.3	1.3	4.6
May	3.8	1.4	5.2
June	2.7	2.0	4.7
July	2.6	1.5	4.1
August	2.3	1.7	4.0
September	2.4	2.0	4.4
October	2.7	1.7	4.4
November	2.6	2.1	4.7
December	2.1	1.8	3.9
Average	2.9	1.6	4.5

published manuscripts with special emphasis on the sudden increase of submissions from authors from the Kingdom.

This year, SMJ is changing its attitude towards the number of publications every month. Decreasing its number of publications in favor of better quality articles and rapid processing of manuscripts.

We are pleased to announce the addition of new features. In this issue, we include a new section of abstracts from the Cochrane Library. These contain updated reviews from The Cochrane Collaboration, Cochrane Reviews. This section will serve to spread more scientific information. We also plan to add more pages to accommodate a new multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ) section in coming issues.

We welcome 2 new Associate Editors Dr. Arwa Al-Sayed and Dr. Maha Al-Mohaya, both Dental Consultants, to our Editorial Team. Saudi Medical Journal is now accepting papers for publication in all Dental Specialties and Maxillofacial Surgery.

The prestige and quality of a scientific journal depends on the excellence of the staff, Advisory and Editorial Board Members, authors, and reviewers. Their efficiency and speed in the review process has increased. In this regard, we would like to express our gratitude to all of them for their hard work in spite of their very busy schedules and for their support in making this journal a possibility.

**Saud Al-Omani, MD**  
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