Editorial

J-AIM: Progress, policy and future plans

1. Progress

J-AIM is completing eight years of successful and timely publications. The journal was established in 2010 by the Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) with the goal of facilitating renaissance of traditional health systems and its evidence based integration with modern sciences and medicine. Since 2016, J-AIM is being published by Elsevier and has expanded its global visibility. J-AIM was already indexed in Scopus, PubMed, EMBASE and has recently entered in Web of Science under Emerging Source Citation Index (ESCI). We expect to receive Impact Factor in near future. J-AIM is a member of COPE, WAME, IAMJE and adheres to principles of publication ethics, best editorial practices and transparency. As a result, J-AIM has become the most sought-after journal for Ayurveda and integrative medicine community.

Publishing a journal timely and maintaining its quality is a team work, which is possible because of the active voluntary support from Editorial Board (EB) members, reviewers, authors and readers. We acknowledge generous support by World Ayurveda Foundation (WAF) that has enabled us to offer open access for published articles.

2. Increasing aspirations – declining ethics

Currently, we are witnessing increasing aspirations pertaining to the quality of research publications in AYUSH sector. This is evident by the increased number of submissions received by J-AIM. The desperation to publish seems to be increasing amongst students and teachers. We are also experiencing increased incidence of poorly written manuscripts, attempts of plagiarism and compromised publication ethics. Many institutes and Universities have initiated awareness campaigns for scientific publications for students and faculty. In general, we find lack of awareness about publication ethics and a casual approach of authors. As a result, current rate of article rejection ranges from 80 to 90%. This indicates urgent need for capacity building to improve research quality, rigor and scientific writing skills.

J-AIM stands by its commitment to maintain highest quality and standards of publication ethics. We consider editorial process as a capacity building exercise. The submission and review process is handled in critical yet constructive manner to offer learning exercise for authors, even if the manuscript is rejected after several rounds of revisions. Many articles are rejected due to plagiarism which gets detected with robust software during preliminary editorial check.

Many submissions are mere compilations without any critical analysis or value addition. Many authors are still not aware of publication ethics regulations and guidelines like the UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2017 issued by the University Grants Commission (https://www.ugc.ac.in/ugc_notices.aspx?id=1764) and other bodies like COPE (www.publicationethics.org).

Inadequate conceptual clarity, ill-conceived objectives, inappropriate methodology, study designs and biased analysis are few more reasons for rejection. Systematic errors, defective concepts and poor planning of a study are many times beyond any repair. Such studies, experiments or reviews, becomes sheer waste of time and resources. It is unethical and disgraceful to the spirit of science to do meaningless, sub-standard research leading to wastage of time and national resources. Many authors do not cite related literature, which is also unethical and unscientific. Despite available guidelines for biomedical research involving human participants, many manuscripts neither maintain ethical standards nor register their studies in clinical trial registries.

Quality of manuscript writing can be improved by adopting guidelines of agencies like Equator Network (www.equator-network.org). Inappropriate data presentation, wrong arrangements of tables, poor clarity figures are commonly seen in many manuscripts. The most common challenge faced by many authors is use of lucid language and correct grammar. A checklist for authors regarding good publishing practices for AYUSH research might be helpful in improving quality of manuscripts [1]. In short, majority of manuscripts submitted to J-AIM require serious hand-holding, careful language and copy-editing.

3. Outreach of J-AIM

Contributions in terms of quality time, dedication and support from Associate Editors, Editorial Board (EB) members and reviewers are very valuable for J-AIM. They have to spend a lot of time in review, re-review and efficient handling of editorial processes. The responsibilities of editors are intensified due to increased number of submissions and unethical practices. They also need to be tuned with emerging guidelines and standards of publications and research methods. J-AIM is supported by hundreds of voluntary reviewers who are reputed researchers in their respective fields. The contributions by these reviewers are phenomenal. They always work in disguise, but their role in shaping science and capacity building is very crucial.

Improvement happens only after peer review criticism is received in right spirit by authors and it is considered as a learning opportunity. J-AIM mostly receives manuscripts related to...
interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research; hence we invite reviewers from diverse disciplines to ensure thorough scrutiny. We have noticed sincere efforts and patience of authors during the rounds of revisions. Many authors have kindly acknowledged that the critical review process has certainly helped them to improve their writing and presentation skills. This indeed is an assuring scenario especially when academic integrity and publication ethics are being increasingly compromised because of mushroomed predatory publishers and dubious journals [2].

4. New policy and future plans

J-AIM is not just a scientific journal. It has the commitment for capacity building, improving quality of research and publication standards. As per the new policy, we wish to encourage our authors not only reading Ayurvedic literature but also modern scientific publications as well. Acquiring culture of reading is one of the important attributes of a good researcher and hence we expect authors to subscribe J-AIM and other scientific periodicals. JAIM editorial team has conducted many training programs to create awareness and improve scientific writing skills especially amongst AYUSH researchers. The response of post-graduate students and young teachers in such programs has been overwhelming. We wish to strengthen capacity and improve skills of J-AIM authors with specially organized workshops and online courses.

Our editorial team along with Elsevier is providing efficient online support to authors and reviewers. The accepted articles will be processed for language editing, stylistic and grammatical improvements to ensure high quality publication. Such services are offered by most of the reputed publishers and journals. More details of the new policy and support will be published on the website. We hope this will further stimulate scientific reading culture, which will help in improvement of scientific writing skills. J-AIM has already initiated decentralization of review process by including experienced associate editors who are empowered to independently handle manuscripts. We are trying to reduce the duration of review process and expedite online publication of accepted articles. We hope that the new policies will be helpful for authors and further improve the process of manuscript submission and the quality of published articles.

We thank the members of previous EB and welcome the new ones. Details of the new EB will be available on J-AIM homepage. We welcome suggestions to take the journal to newer heights.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy new year 2018!

Conflict of interest

None.

References

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[2] Patwardhan B. Indian science and predatory journals. J Ayurveda Integr Med 2017;8(1):1–2.

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