Ten years of J-AIM

In January 2020, the Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine (J-AIM) successfully completed a decade of timely and quality publication. Established in 2010, the journal is an internationally circulated, peer reviewed, open access publication of Transdisciplinary University (TDU, formerly, Foundation of Revitalization of Local Health Traditions) and World Ayurveda Foundation (WAF), Bengaluru. Since 2016, J-AIM has been published by Elsevier, giving it a global platform. During the past decade, J-AIM has published research on integrating diverse disciplines such as Ayurveda, traditional medicine, biomedicine and contemporary health sciences to promote effective, safe and affordable global health. As a member of the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) and Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE), the journal adheres to best editorial practices and principles of publication ethics. It is indexed in Web of Science under ESCI, PubMed, Scopus and UGC-CARE. The Editorial team acknowledges the continuous, active voluntary support of all our Editorial Board (EB) members and reviewers without whom the timely and quality publication of the journal would not have been possible. We would also like to thank all authors and readers for their support and trust; without them, the journal would cease to exist. We hope to continue receiving your support in future.

1. A decade of experiences

J-AIM received a warm welcome after publication of its maiden issue. The congratulatory messages from experts in not only Ayurveda but also modern medicine were extremely motivating [1]. As the journal completes a decade, it is still regarded as one of the top journals in the Ayurveda and integrative medicine category. The past ten years have been a challenging yet rewarding journey for us. They have provided us various insights and have motivated us to achieve constant improvement. As for any journal, J-AIM’s initial few years were dedicated to increasing the number of submissions and maintaining that number. The journal is now ready for the next leap forward.

J-AIM editorial have always discussed important issues, policies and insights for the AYUSH sector. With this editorial, we would like to share experiences from the past decade hoping that they will inculcate the art of scientific communication thereby improving the quality of research articles.

Over the decade, there has been a steady rise in the number of submissions to the journal. The J-AIM editors spend substantial time reviewing the manuscripts and providing critical advice to authors to make improvements. The peer review process is extremely stringent to maintain the quality of the manuscripts. However, the quality of submissions remains a challenge, and poor quality has led to an increased rejection rate. Since 2016 itself, we have received over 1800 submissions of which only about 270 have been accepted. There are a number of reasons for this low acceptance rate. The primary reason for rejection is the poor quality of the manuscripts including content and presentation as well as lack of novelty. Many manuscripts have striking similarity with published literature. Most of our desk rejections (around 68%) are due to this high level of plagiarism, which has become a global phenomenon and is spreading like an infection [2]. We have received several manuscripts which have been copy-pasted from various sources including research articles, books, popular articles and even transcripts of video lectures with plagiarism of 98%! Self-plagiarism is also high and should be treated with equal gravitas. Fabrication, falsification and duplication of data have also been observed with authors using their previously published figures for new manuscripts. The ‘publish or perish’ phenomenon has definitely led researchers to resort to grave ethical misconduct. These are extremely serious issues and can impair a researcher’s career greatly.

Authors today need to be sensitized towards this issue and should be made aware of various types of research misconduct. ‘Me-too’ articles may be attributed to the selection and quality of research topics. Any good publication needs good research [3]. Most research studies reported today are a waste due to flawed methodology, ethical misconduct, incorrect statistics and data presentation, superficial discussion and hence are often rejected. Many resources are wasted in this process. Hence, it is imperative to emphasize the need and importance of selecting a good research topic and train researchers in research methodology. Another observation from the numerous J-AIM submissions is that references are often cited from predatory journals. Such references lead to the ‘GIGO’ effect, meaning ‘garbage in, garbage out’. Universities and colleges should create awareness and imbibe scientific writing skills, publication ethics and research methodology amongst students. Awareness regarding predatory journals also needs to be created amongst researchers.

2. Preparing for the next steps

The experiences from the past decade have definitely made us wiser. They have helped us improve the quality of the journal, bring it to new heights and, more importantly, prepare for the next decade. Looking at the current state of affairs of scientific

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publishing globally, the research misconduct may continue to rise in future. Hence, it is crucial to be prepared for it. Keeping this in mind, J-AIM has undertaken an initiative to train post graduate and doctoral students in scientific communication. The initiative titled ‘Summer internship in science communication’ will provide training and exposure to three research students in scientific writing, publication ethics and research methodology. The J-AIM Editorial Team will also conduct sessions on scientific writing and publication ethics for graduate, post graduate and doctoral students. This year, we shall also be conducting our 2nd National workshop on publication ethics and scientific writing. We hope these initiatives will be useful to the students for their future. The journal is extending its activities to bridge gaps between clinicians, teachers and researchers from AYUSH as well as those from biomedical sciences.

We once again thank all the EB members, reviewers, authors and readers for their continuous support and guidance, and hope to continue to receive it in the next decade as well. We welcome suggestions to improve the journal and take it to new heights.

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