EDITORIAL

doi: 10.5455/medarch.2017.71.4-6

Med Arch. 2017 Feb; 71(1): 4-6

Received: JAN 05, 2016 | Accepted: JAN 25, 2017

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Steps to Improve Journal Quality – Example of “Medical Archives”

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1. “MEDICAL ARCHIVES” JOURNAL DURING THE YEAR 2016

Journal “Medical Archives”, the official journal of Academy of Medical Sciences of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has got a new web site from January 1st, 2017 (Figure 1). “Medical Archives” was established in 1947 and it is the oldest and the most important journal for clinical practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which covers the area of all clinical disciplines of

medical sciences. Articles published in the “Medical Archives” during 2016 came from three continents (Europe, Asia and North America) and from 15 different countries. The largest number of articles came from the country of origin of the journal, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 2). The total amount of 110 articles were published in “Medical Archives” during 2016. Acceptance rate in 2016 was 35.7% (Figure 3). The most com-

Figure 1. “Medical Archives” journal official website (www.medarch.org)

Figure 2. Articles by the country of origin published in “Medical Archives” in 2016.

Figure 3. The “Medical Archives” acceptance rate in 2016

Figure 4. Structure of the articles published in Med Arch according to type

Figure 5. Article distribution in Med Arch in 2016 according to the medical field

mon type of published articles in 2016 was “original article” (64,5%), (Figure 4).

Out of the total number of articles, 82,7% were from the fields of clinical medicine, which is the primary scope of “Medical Archives” (Figure 5). According to scimagojr.com the SJR-index of Medical Archives is 0.21 and the H-index is 14. Google Scholar h5-index of the journal is 14, while h5-median is 21. In the review process of manuscripts during the 2016 participated 186 reviewers.

“Medical Archives” will continue in 2017 with further development and improving the quality of the journal. The goal of the Editorial Board members is journal indexation in the Web of Science (WoS), with the continuous increasing the quality of the journal articles through education of potential authors, reviewers and Editorial Board members, quality selection of reviewers, supportive editing of articles, and clearly defining instructions and ethical standards of the journal (1, 2).

2. STEPS IN JOURNAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Each journal represents a final product of joint efforts of the Editors and Editorial Board members, reviewers and authors themselves. Various steps are going to be undertaken for the journal improvement in 2017 and beyond.

Expansion of the Editorial Board would be among the first steps following the trends of the modern world. In addition to the first two Editors (Editor in Chief and Co-Editor-in-Chief), Secretary and Language Editor the practice of the journal would be strengthened by appointing Design Editor, Production Editor, Statistics Editor, etc. Research Integrity Editor would be a person who deals with ethical issues in the approval and implementation of the study generating results to be published in the journal. All clinical studies should pass through the hands of Clinical Trial Issues Editor, who would deal with the validity of clinical studies, and would also make sure that application of these studies are appropriate. A growing number of authors who are PhD students and authors who deal with rehabilitation nursing jobs, led to the need for people who deal only with their articles, especially in separate columns (3).

All the members of the Editorial Board should be listed on the website, along with a short biography, and with ORCID ID and/or Scopus ID, in order all future authors who apply their articles to the journal to find information about the people who manage the journal, and their relevance to a particular branch of medicine.

Instructions to authors should be clear, concise, and to provide comprehensive information about the journal, including guidelines which regularly improve the ethical standards, quality and implications of published articles. Instructions for authors must be regularly revised. Special attention must be paid to the ethical principles of the journal, which must be clearly presented and transparent (1). Transparency is one of the features for efficient work of the journal, as well as a condition for improved visibility of the journal and indexation.

Journals’ applications to global indexing abstract and citation databases are often declined due to the lack of transparent and ethical editorial strategies, inappropriate scope of interest, low level of evidence, and low citation rates (1). Education of scientific community in research and publication ethics and integrity is essential for creating ethical environment and tradition to prevent scientific and publishing dishonesty, fraud and plagiarism (2). Transparency of journal is reflected in monitoring the principles set out by the COPE, OASPA, DOAJ, and WAME.

Information about the journal and its indexation must be clearly visible, if possible with the existing links that confirms that information. There is an increasing number of predatory journals that show various unrealistic impact factors, so author must be well informed about what is important in science – the real publishing world.

Portal for submitting articles (journal management system), should be simple, screenable, and it should be a good source of information, to authors, reviewers and editorial board members. It represents a data source for

scientometric analysis of journal, or the authors themselves (4, 5).

Template for preparation of an article must be available in journal's instructions. Authors must follow the template in writing an article. The structure that is set in operation of the journal, must be clearly traced. References in the article list must be properly cited and connected to the text, because they are of great importance in scientometric analysis (6). When writing the articles, authors should write their ORCID ID, which will certainly be used more, and will become a thing that will be essential for monitoring of work of one author. Mostly works are published in English, so Language Editors of journal have to have excellent language skills, with good knowledge of the topics of journal itself. Poorly presented abstract and title, flawed study design, inappropriate research question and hypothesis, poor selection of statistical tests, being too verbiage about study results, disorganized writing style with too much grammatical and syntax errors and poor presentation of tables and figures are some of the main flaws as reasons for rejection of manuscripts (2). Conflicts of interest must be clearly defined in each article.

Journals must clearly present to the author the authorship rights, as well as the obligations of the journal in accordance with the ICMJE criteria. “Medical Archives” are managed in such way and require authors to meet all these criteria. In case of open access journals, open access format should be clearly introduced - green, gold, hybrid or diamond. SHERPA / ROMEO classification classifies publishers in green, blue, yellow and white format (2).

Reviewers of articles must be experts in their fields, and to give clear and comprehensive review of the articles, and to point out the shortcomings of the article, if any, and they have to present clear instructions to editorial board about the quality of manuscripts. The journal should annually present, in the last issue of the year, a list of reviewers who contributed in the review process of manuscripts submitted for publishing during the year. Peer review is at the heart of the processes of not just medical journals but of all of science (3). Reviewers should have clearly defined deadlines for review of the article, and this deadline must be noted. The quality of journal is, first of all, the mirror of the expertise of the reviewers.

Information about the journal should be updated yearly, and be presented to the authors, so they could have a clear insight into the work of the journal (4-6).

Editors must strive for greater visibility of the journal, following the latest trends in modern scientific community and continuously improve their scientific knowledge and editorial skills, although the editors are mostly renowned experts from the domain in which the journal operates. Editors, in correlation with the outcome of reviews, must clearly and kindly inform the authors for required revision of the manuscript, with an attachment of the review report, and eventually, in case of rejection, to

inform authors where their article could be forwarded/ submitted for possible publishing in some other journal.

3. CONCLUSION

“Medical Archives” is the oldest and the most important journal for clinical practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which covers the areas of almost all clinical disciplines of medical sciences (founded in 1947 as a professional journal of the “Association of Physicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (7, 8)). The total number of 110 articles was published in “Medical Archives” during 2016. The most of them were original articles (64,5%). Articles from the fields of clinical medicine were predominant (82,7%), which is the primary scope of the journal. Authors of the published articles in 2016 are dispersed to three continents (Europe, Asia and North America) and 15 different countries. The largest number of articles was submitted by authors from the country of origin of the journal, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The acceptance rate of “Medical Archives” in 2016 was 35.7%. According to scimagojr.com the SJR-index of “Medical Archives” is 0.21 and the H-index is 14. Google Scholar h5-index of the journal is 14, while the h5-median is 21. Total number of 186 reviewers participated in the manuscript review process in 2016. “Medical Archives” will continue to improve the quality of the published papers in 2017 through education of potential authors, reviewers and Editorial Board members, quality selection of reviewers, supportive editing of articles, and clearly defining instructions and ethical standards of the journal.

• Conflict of interest: none declared.

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