

# Status of PM&DC Recognized Research Journals of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The objective of this study was to know the status of PM&DC recognized journals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**Study Design:** Descriptive/cross-sectional study.

**Place and Duration of Study:** This study was carried out in the Department of Community Medicine, WMC, Abbottabad from January 2015 to April 2015.

**Materials and Methods:** A self administered structured questionnaire was designed. Data obtained on eight sampled journals was analysed manually, tables and figures constructed using MS Excel 2007. Latest issues of journals provided by the respondents and literature review were used as additional sources of data. Frequencies of variables like number of issues, publication fee, recognition, accessibility, qualifications of managing team, and ethical approval of researches were calculated.

**Results:** One journal was indexed by MedLine, which was recognized by HEC, PM&DC and CPSP as well. Six out of eight journals had both chief editors and managing editors from clinical sciences. None of the journals had an Impact Factor. All journal hold a publication fee.

**Conclusion:** In KP, medical journals need improvement in terms of recognition, indexation, research publication ethics, publication fee and online availability and a uniform recognition criteria by HEC, PMDC and CPSP is missing.

**Key Words:** Medical Journalism, Journal Impact Factor, MedLine

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## INTRODUCTION

A journal is an academic magazine published in regular intervals and contains research articles written by experts in a particular field of study<sup>1</sup>. With the advent of Evidence Based Medicine (EBM), medical journals became even more popular and scaled up. The quality of these journal is mostly judged through impact factor, indexation and peer review. Impact Factor (IF) is regarded as a widely accepted tool having objectivity<sup>2</sup>. The idea of IF was devised by Eugene Garfield in 1955, which is the number of times articles/items from a journal published in previous 2 years are cited in the current year divided by the number of articles published in that journal during those 2 years<sup>3</sup>. Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) Philadelphia, also known as Thomson Scientific<sup>2</sup> or Thomson Reuters, publishes Journal Citation Report (JCR) since 1975 in which IF of journals is reported<sup>3,4</sup>.

Indexation has become the most controversial topic due to the presence of many popular indexation services. The oldest of these is Index Medicus, which started its publication in 1879 by John Shaw Billings<sup>5</sup>

under the present day National Library of Medicine (NLM), Maryland. MEDLINE is an electronic version of that publication and in 1997, it was made freely available through a new system called PubMed<sup>6</sup>. Other indexation services are also available which include Index Medicus of the World Health Organization for the six regions (ie African Region, Region of the Americas, South-East Asia Region, European Region, Eastern Mediterranean Region, and Western Pacific Region), EMBASE, SCOPUS, EBSCO Publishing's Electronic Databases, SCIRUS, Caspur, DOAJ, Expanded Academic ASAP, Genamics Journal Seek, Hinari, Index Copernicus, Open J Gate, Primo Central, Pro Quest, SCOLAR, SIIC databases, Summon by Serial Solutions, Ulrich's and International Periodical Directory<sup>5</sup>. But the unresolved debate is that which one should be regarded as a token of true quality. By far the most widely used indexation service is PubMed/MedLine. There are many examples where a journal having IF is not indexed with PubMed/MedLine and vice versa<sup>5,7</sup>.

In Pakistan, medical journals are recognized by three bodies; Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC) and College of Physician & Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP). It is mandatory for a medical journal to be registered with HEC and PM&D<sup>8,9</sup>. Currently, there are 48 journals listed by HEC as recognized, including two biology, a biochemistry and a clinical psychology journals;

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majority being medical journals, 72 journals are listed by PM&DC and 10 by the CPSP<sup>10,11,12</sup>. All CPSP listed ten journals are PM&DC recognized and are given Index Pakistan (IP) Number by the PM&DC<sup>11</sup>. HEC classifies its recognized journals into four categories; W, X, Y, and Z<sup>13</sup>. Journals included in JCR and having an IF are classified as category "W".

A journal without an IF but with peer review by at least one expert in the respective discipline from an academically advanced country is categorized "X".

A journal without IF and without being reviewed by an expert from academically advanced country but having other HEC journal recognition criteria like being abstracted /indexed internationally by the HEC recognized agency is placed in category "Y".

A journal that has all HEC journal criteria except IF, expert peer review from academically advanced country, being abstracted /indexed internationally by the HEC recognized agency, is placed in category "Z". Publication in category "Z" journals is acceptable only for Basic Pay Scale (BPS) appointments and publication of PhD research work on languages only<sup>13</sup>.

After 30 June 2016, only those journals having an IF will be considered as HEC recognized journals.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), new medical colleges, both in public and private sectors are continuously being established. Medical faculty publish their researches for academic, promotion and appointment purposes in PM&DC recognized journals published from the province but we could hardly find any study on the status and quality of these journals. This study was conducted with the objective to know the status of PM&DC recognized journals in KP.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross sectional survey was conducted from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> April 2015. A list of all PM&DC

recognized journals of KP was obtained from PM&DC web site. All those journals listed but ceased to publish from KP were excluded. A total of eight journals were sampled out after excluding two. A structured, self administered questionnaire was designed and filled from the chief editor, managing editor or editor of each journal by visiting each of them by research associates. Information on publication frequency, publication fee, recognition, accessibility, reviewers, qualifications of managing team, and ethical approval of researches was obtained. Respondents were requested to provide a current issue of their respective journal for further analysis like checking online availability and authorship criteria. Being feasible, data analysis was done manually while graphs and tables were constructed using MS Excel 2007. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethical Review Board of the Women Medical College Abbottabad.

## RESULTS

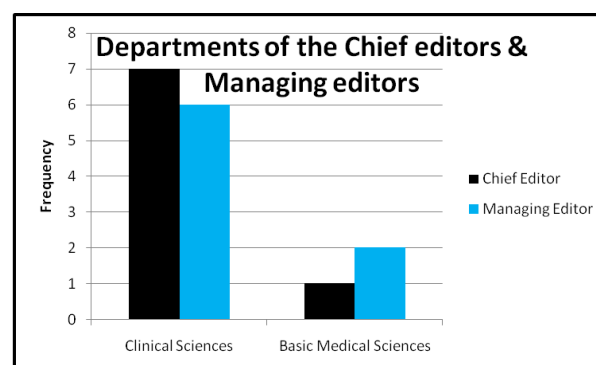


Figure No.1: Departments of the Chief editors and Managing editors.

Table No.1: Characteristics of PM&DC recognized journals of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa\*.

Name of Journal	IP#	IF	HEC category	MedLine/ IMEMR Indexation	CPSP recognition	Online availability of Articles
Journal of Postgraduate Medical Institute, LRH, Peshawar	12	Nil	X	Nil	No	All articles
Journal of Medical Sciences, KTH, Peshawar	16	Nil	Y	IMEMR	No	Last one missing
Journal of Ayub Medical College, AMC Abbotabad	25	Nil	Y	MedLine	Yes	All articles
Gomal Journal of Medical Sciences, D.I.Khan	30	Nil	Y	IMEMR	No	All articles
Khyber Journal of Medical Sciences (KJMS), Peshawar	55	Nil	N.A	N.A	No	18 articles missing
Khyber Medical University Journal (KMU-J), Kohat	60	Nil	X	IMEMR	No	All articles
Journal of Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar	63	Nil	N.A	IMEMR	No	All articles
Journal of Saidu Medical College, Swat	64	Nil	N.A	N.A	No	Not available

\*Information based on literature review<sup>10-12</sup>, Journal issues and data provided by respondents.

Five out of eight journals were fully available online while one was partially available and another one was completely missing (Table:01).

Only one journal had both its chief editor and managing editor from the department of Basic Medical Sciences

(Community Medicine) and another one had only its managing editor from Basic Medical Sciences (Physiology). Rest of the journals had both its chief editors and managing editors from clinical sciences (Figure:01). Journal with both its chief editor and

managing editors from Basic Medical Sciences is the only journal which is not only recognized by all the three bodies i.e PM&DC, HEC, CPSP but also indexed by MedLine (Table:1).

There is no uniform criteria set by different journals; some journals published with the same frequency and same indexation have different submission fee. All but one journal allegedly ensured ethical approval of the research prior to publication (Table:2).

**Table No.2: Frequency of Journals against different Variables**

Variables	frequency (n=08)
Respondents:	
Managing Editors	06
Editors	02
IP # provided by Respondents	
Correct	02
Incorrect	05
None	01
Frequency of Publication	
Biannually	03
Quarterly	05
Ethical approval ensured	
Yes	07
No	01
Reviewers are not members of the editorial board and keep on changing from issue to issue	08
Vancouver style followed for citation	08

## DISCUSSION

Eight journals recognized by Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC) are published from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Out of these eight, three journals are not listed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan<sup>10</sup>. One journal is recognized by the College of Physicians and Surgeon Pakistan (CPSP) and indexed by MedLine as well. Two journals did not provide information about their indexation while one reported being indexed by bodies other than MedLine and Index Medicus of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (IMEMR). Indexation by the NLM and WHO is considered a standard in this study by virtue of its popularity.

None of the journals has an Impact Factor and according to HEC, will not be considered HEC recognized beyond June 30, 2016<sup>10</sup>. Online availability is an important attribute and regarded mandatory by the PM&DC for recognition of a journal<sup>14</sup>. It facilitates different organizations to verify articles and authorship if someone claims credit.

## CONCLUSION

Research background of the managing team can add to the prestige and recognition of a Journal. In KP, medical journals need improvement in terms of

recognition, indexation, research publication ethics, publication fee and online availability. Fate of these journals after June 2016 can't be predicted in terms of recognition by HEC at this point in time. Recognition by a single body alone does not make a journal prestigious and the establishment of new medical colleges and medical universities both in the public and private sector will lead to launch of further research journals. A uniform criteria may be adopted by all the three bodies (PM&DC, HEC, CPSP) in order to standardize research journals in the province so that a journal recognized by one body may be considered authentic by other bodies as well.

**Conflict of Interest:** The study has no conflict of interest to declare by any author.

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