

# Restructuring of Pakistan Journal of Ophthalmology

The primary objective of the Ophthalmic Society of Pakistan is promotion of education and science in the field of Ophthalmology. The Pakistan Journal of Ophthalmology is the principal tool through which the second objective is to be attained. To achieve this objective the PJO has to adapt and change. The cause of science in Pakistan will be served if the PJO gets recognition in national and international databases and builds the impact factor of the journal.

To meet these objectives Pakistan journal of ophthalmology has been undergoing evolutionary changes for the last few years. To improve the impact factor and get accreditation the PJO needed to become an electronic Journal, recruit competent peer review members and establish standard operating procedures (SOP) for publishing. Some of the objectives have been met and some will be accomplished in the next few years.

PJO was started in Nov 1968 in Lahore and the first editor in chief was Prof. Raja Mumtaz. Later it was published by Khalid J Awan from 1985 - 1993 from USA. Finally it was restarted in Pakistan by Prof. Lateef Chaudhry in 1993. The journal has always been a precious jewel of the society and all the members want it to progress rapidly over the next few years and to be recognized by the higher education commission of Pakistan and Medline. A lot of systematic steps need to be taken before this can be accomplished. This was apprehended by the Prof. Lateef, the ex chief editor of PJO, and the President of the OSP, Dr. Mazhar Qayyum. The first pre-requisite was establishment of a transparent process of selecting the next editor in chief. This procedure was established and by consensus of the Central Council of the Ophthalmological selected Prof. Syed Ali Haider as Editor in Chief for a fixed term of 4 years. A new Chief Editor will be appointed by the Central Council after this period is over.

The journal is published quarterly with 10 original articles, 1 case report and abstracts from other journals. This has been made electronic with the following features. Current issue and archives for the

last 10 years are available for preview as abstracts and full text articles in HTML and PDF formats. A very useful search engine has been included which will let anybody search the PJO for articles by giving the name of the author or title of the article. The peer review committee is helping us finalize more articles for printing so we have introduced a section showing these finalized articles as published ahead of print. In the future we plan to make this a bimonthly journal with the support of local and international authors. A section for online submission and subscription application has been included. The instructions for authors section, has been edited and now PJO accepts articles only in electronic format.

The next big task was to recruit competent peer review members to improve and hasten the review process of articles submitted for publication. This has been accomplished in part by selection of peer review faculty from all teaching hospitals across Pakistan. We are planning to hold sessions in all the national meetings to interact with the faculty so that the process of article review can be standardized. Invitations have been sent to many international authors to become members of the peer review committee.

A standard operating procedure for all submitted articles has been established over the last 2 years after hiring a dedicated desk manager for the journal. As soon as the article is submitted an acknowledgment letter is sent to the author. The paper goes through initial screening and in the next few months we will put it through anti-plagiarism software. At this stage the article can be rejected outright if does not meet the minimum acceptance criteria. Later it undergoes peer review by 2 members who will certify it for acceptance or rejection with comments for improvement of the article. We plan to hire a statistician to check for all the calculations in the journal. Once the article has been corrected by the author, the final go ahead for printing is given by the editor and editor in chief. The articles that are not accepted by reviewers are sent to a senior peer review committee for final assessment. Their

verdict on the fate of an article is considered final. The accepted articles are uploaded as published ahead of print and are also sent to the publisher for hard copy publication. Hard copies are circulated to all the members through mail. At the same time all members of the OSP are sent an E. mail alert by using a dedicated member database of all the members of the OSP.

The task of generation of funds, printing, posting, maintenance of a database of subscribers and management of the staff falls with the office of the managing editor, held by Prof Nadeem H. Butt. Constant improvement is being made to improve the quality of print of the journal. Every life member of the OSP is entitled to receive a copy of the journal, which is a huge drain on finances of the journal. It is expected of all members to notify the office of the journal of any change in address.

PJO has now been approved by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council and listed in DOAJ (Open access database), Index Copernicus and Open J Gate. Application for approval by the Higher Education

Commission of Pakistan has been submitted. We are constantly trying to improve the impact factor of the journal by improving the quality of articles, selection of articles from all sub-specialties, improve citation of PJO articles in other journals and improve access of full articles.

The next step would be to improve the quality of research being done in the field of Ophthalmology. The editors of the PJO send extensive feedback to the authors to help them improve their articles and their writing skills. The OSP has taken an important step in this regard by creating a research foundation, which offers financial help to conduct research proposals.

In conclusion restructuring of the PJO is important for national and international recognition of the journal. Moreover it will provide a forum for national research and develop a research culture.

**Prof. Muhammad Moin**