

Journal of IMDC- 'Inaugural Issue'

Khalid Hassan

Professor and Head, Department of Pathology, Islamabad Medical and Dental College, Islamabad
(Bahria University, Islamabad)

It is a matter of great pleasure and honour for Islamabad Medical and Dental College to launch the inaugural issue of its official journal- Journal of Islamabad Medical College (JIMDC). The main aim of launching this journal is not only to promote the trend of medical writing in the college, but also to effectively support research activities at both faculty as well as students' levels. JIMDC will publish original (research) articles, review articles, case reports, brief communications, interesting images, abstracts from contemporary journal, and literature related to continued medical education.

The last two decades have witnessed a surge of medical publications at national level, mainly as a result of the introduction of criteria of mandatory research publications for promotions in the cadres of medical teachers. With the introduction of these rules, the medical teachers were compulsorily pushed into research activities. As a consequence, the few existing journal in the country were choked with research articles submitted for publication. With the passage of time many new journals were introduced. Most of these journals were published by professional societies and various institutions. In an attempt to maintain uniformity with the international practices of medical publications, PMDC and Higher Education Commission (HEC) implemented strict regulations for peer review of the journals as an essential requirement for their approval. Although the steps taken by the PMDC and HEC have resulted in a general trend of medical writing, yet the 'quantity as well as quality' of research in the country are far from satisfactory. Reasons are multiple, and some of these are as under:

1. A big percentage of publications are based on retrospective studies in a setup where record keeping is not optimally standardized, and as a result the inferences derived are more presumptive than absolute.

2. The studies designed are usually based on data obtained from hospital population, and many a time, the values thus obtained are related to general population.
3. There is still a dearth of true epidemiological studies, and therefore a true picture of disease pattern in various sets of population is not exactly documentable.
4. The research is generally not problem-based; on the contrary, emphasis is mostly on verification of already published national and international data.
5. The researchers are generally handicapped by paucity of funds and lack of diagnostic facilities.

There is a need to address all these issues systematically. Although it may be difficult initially, yet it will be rewarding if a consolidated effort is made to develop habit of proper and regular record keeping. The tertiary care hospitals and medical institutions and professional societies may establish research forums, which should develop their own research guidelines. IMDC has taken a step in this regard, and has established a research forum for the medical students. The students interested in participating in research have been enrolled; the students thus registered will conduct epidemiological and clinical studies under the supervision of their teachers. For the students as well as faculty members workshops will be arranged especially regarding development of research proposals, research methodology, statistical analysis and medical writing. It is hoped that these steps will contribute in capacity-building at both student as well as faculty level.

It is my foremost duty to thank the editorial committee of the journal who made a team effort in bringing out the inaugural issue. I am indebted to Dr Ghulam Akbar Niazi, the Chairman IMDC and Prof Muhammad Naseemullah, Dean IMDC, who guided and encouraged us at every step. I am also thankful to Bahria University for their coordination.

It is further presumed that the Journal of IMDC will play a significant role in projecting and disseminating research in the years to come.