

Gathering Momentum

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It has been decided that IeJSME should be a general rather than specialty medical journal in that it would cover work ranging from bench science to clinical and medical education research. While this is to ensure the ease of soliciting sufficient manuscripts for sustainability of the journal, the other important reason is to provide learning opportunities for novice researchers, including undergraduate medical students, to improve their work in such a way that are publishable at a certain research quality.¹ This intention is being birthed primarily with our 16-year old medical university and Malaysia in mind, although, as the journal title suggests, we aim that the work published in IeJSME will have international relevance and importance.

As illustrated in this second issue, we have a range of research topics covered in the accepted manuscripts that included two unsolicited articles from outside our institution and Malaysia. Some of these authors are novice researchers in that these articles are their pilot publications, and therefore such endeavours reflect some success of our Journal to fulfil its nurturing role for a research culture. In a recent editorial by AM Zabidi-Hussin, it is clear that our government is committed to ongoing investment in human development in the field of science and technology that encompasses biotechnology and medical sciences, made obvious by the definite trend in research fund allocation in its Ninth Malaysian Plan.² With this in mind, our business of publishing and disseminating important research findings can help in the tender cultivation of such a culture and its human resource.

Like any major medical journals, much of the editorial time is taken up with the process of peer-reviewing, an activity that is still considered indispensable to lending respectability and scientific credibility to the work published and consequently the journals.³ We adopt the policy of having two blinded reviewers, one from the university and another outside, for any submitted manuscripts, except for research notes where only one reviewer is invited. The editorial board, especially the

editor, plays the crucial role of selecting reviewers and deciding on the final acceptance of the manuscripts based on these reviews. The effectiveness of scientific peer review has recently come under much criticism, having been shown to lack evidence to improve quality of published work and incapable of detecting scientific fraud.^{4,5} The way forward seems to be development of an empirically proven method of quality assurance⁵ but until such a time, the practice of peer review will continue to be necessary.

We anticipate that IeJSME will seek out its own identity and better define its purpose in the ensuing years. There may be a need to consider the adoption of certain editorial policies to influence direction of the Journal. At this stage of infancy, the editorial process of maintaining the Journal has been established and is no doubt subjected to the usual woes of busy communication and manuscript reviewing and editing, a work that is very elegantly carried out by Dr Lee Lai-Kah, the Editorial Assistant. Subscribing to the required standard of editorial integrity by international body of scientific publication⁶ is another important aspect of editorial work that we hope to demonstrate transparency and accountability. There is much reward in ensuring that any noble intentions we have for this Journal continue to be actively pursued, and that the efforts would not sink into mediocrity.

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