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Letter to Editor

Selection of Appropriate Journal for Publication- Crucial Step for Promotion.

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Research and publication is essential criteria for promotion as per National Medical Commission in India for medical teachers. After writing a good research paper, confusion starts in the mind of author regarding selection of appropriate journal. If journal is not selected properly then issue may arise in promotion. So, selection of journal is indeed a very important step. Few crucial points are focused here which must be kept in mind while selection of journal.

Subject area: Journal must be chosen according to subject area in which article has been written otherwise journal will reject the article as article is not fitting to the aim and scope of the journal. There is lot of confusion among medical teachers regarding frequently changing promotion criteria by statutory council in the past in which at one time focus was given to only subject specific journal.¹

Indexing: Only indexed journals are counted for promotion. There are many indexing agencies but emphasis is given to Medline, Pubmed central, Scopus, Embase, Science citation index, Science citation index expanded, Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ) by National Medical Commission. Initially Index Medicus and Index Copernicus were also considered as indexing agency for promotion. Problem arise here is the gap between submission and publication of article. It may be possible that journal is indexed at the time of submission of article in said indexing database but when article is published it may be not indexed in that database.² So reputation and consistency of journal in

indexing database should be considered before submission.

Online or Print: Author must check for online and print ISSN number of the journal because assessor may demand for hard copy of the issue as the proof of publication. In between statutory council has given notification that online journals will not be accepted. So for the safer side, print version of journal is always beneficial. Although in attempt to save papers, online journals should be promoted.

Open access: Entire article should be available on website to download freely at any time by anyone. Many journals are providing only abstract and key words in open access and for entire article some charge is there. Even for improvement of article citations, open access and free availability of articles to all is necessary. Statutory council has not given any strict guidelines for the same but to improve author's own citations indices, open access is beneficiary.

Charge for publication: Few journals are charging article processing fees or publication fees upon acceptance. Charge varies from journal to journal and sometimes it is very high to afford. This factor is very important and need to be checked before submission of article. Paying high for publication may worth for few authors and may not for others as it is an individual choice to spend on publication. Few institutes may provide such monetary support but not all. So, publication must be planned according to budget.

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Impact factor: Few reputed institutes are focusing more on impact factor but yet statutory council has not given strong recommendation for the same. Many agencies have emerged in near future which are providing impact factor but statutory council must provide specific agency to avoid confusion among authors and to curb impact factor business.

Publication time: Many reputed journals are taking excessive time in peer review process and acceptance of article, on the other hand; many journals are providing fast track facility for publication with additional charges. In many cases, author is in hardcore emergency to meet promotion time line and in such case; journal must be selected as per the need. Submission, revision, acceptance and publication must be in the timeline to meet promotion criteria.

Copyrights and rights of authors: Few journals are taking all copyright for publication from author for print, reprint of article and author just have credit of his work done. Transparent copy right statement on journal website and licensing is important criteria regarding quality of journal. At present there are no suggestions from statutory council regarding this on promotion³.

Genuine peer review: This is one very important process before publication and in current scientific publication race, peer review is mandatory for any journal to achieve indexation. Few journals are publishing name of reviewer board members in public domain and giving due credit for the same but yet all journals are not practicing the same.

In short, selection of journal is not an easy process. Different journals have different policies regarding submission, way of writing, publication charge, copy rights, indexing, providing hard copy to authors, peer review process, etc. Author has to consider his budget, time line for promotion, requirements of statutory council, potential of his article, type of indexing required, impact factor of journal, print version of journal, reputation of publisher, etc.

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