

EDITORIAL

Why should you choose to publish in the *Libyan Journal of Medicine*?

Libyan *Journal of Medicine* (LJM) was established to increase the opportunities for research findings focusing on human health issues in developing nations to be seen along with other international scientific publications. Since its establishment in 2006, LJM has progressed steadily and matured. Its Thomson Reuters Impact Factor now stands at 1.429. In the journal category of general and internal medicine, LJM ranks first among journals in the Arab World and second among journals in Africa. Moreover, articles in LJM are read and cited by authors from all regions of the world. This testifies to its success in achieving its goal of disseminating the research findings of its authors worldwide. Importantly, and as a policy, LJM editors work closely with authors to help them get their manuscripts published.

When editors accept a manuscript for peer review, they counsel the authors, when necessary, in how to improve their manuscripts before external peer review. Such instances can arise when important elements are bypassed, not sufficiently described, or buried within the text. For example, the editors might provide constructive comments to improve the description of the rationale for the research or its contribution to current knowledge. Clarification of such important elements can have a positive impact on how reviewers judge the research. They could also provide the authors with additional supportive comments on the presentation of their research, such as the quality of the graphs or the language. The advantage of our approach is that it gives the referees a better impression of the manuscript, makes it easier for them to evaluate it, diminishes misunderstanding, and anticipates some expected comments.

Nevertheless, although we try to assist authors, it is their responsibility to ensure that their manuscripts are well written in terms of completeness, organization, development, language, and presentation. Poor writing can mask the quality and the value of good research. If the editors and/or reviewers have to struggle through a manuscript to understand it or its potential value, they might have doubts about its suitability for publication.

In journals worldwide, the process from submission to acceptance can last up to several months. The time it takes to get suitable referees is a substantial part of this

delay, and LJM is not an exception. However, we try to speed up the initial editorial review, and if the manuscript is not suitable for publication in LJM, we notify the authors promptly. This is usually done in a matter of days rather than weeks. In that way, we enable authors to submit their manuscript elsewhere without much delay.

A primary requirement for getting a paper published in any journal is novelty. But many reputed journals hesitate to publish papers reporting novel findings if they have only local or regional significance. At LJM, we publish any good research on epidemiological, clinical, or health care issues that aims to improve the health of the people anywhere in the world, whether in Africa, Asia, South America, or the developed nations.

However, we need to mention a point about novelty. Novelty is frequently described in terms of making a contribution to knowledge, which is a continuum extending from groundbreaking to minimal. Repetition of previously published work with a minor and insignificant modification is an example of minimal novelty. At LJM, we aim for higher than the minimal. Furthermore, knowledge should not be confused with information. For example, clinical research data should not be confused with clinical audits that simply review patients' data without asking a specific study question to generate new knowledge. The rationale for a study is also important because it is intimately linked to both novelty and significance. Justifying a study on the sole basis that it has not been done in that country is not on its own a convincing reason. If the phenomenon has been firmly established, such a study would be generating information rather than contributing to knowledge. In such cases, the rationale has to be convincingly based on current knowledge and/or theory.

The LJM editors and reviewers work as volunteers. Their sole interest is the welfare of the journal, and their only reward is maintenance and promotion of its success. It is not an easy task because editorial decisions necessarily involve some subjectivity. We will continue to provide our support to our authors, who report back a high rate of satisfaction with the quality of the publishing process, and we hope that they, in turn, will support LJM with good research.

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