

**EDITORIAL:**

**JOURNAL OF PAKISTAN PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY: REFLECTIONS OF PUBLICATION JOURNEY FROM 2021 TO 2024**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society (JPPS) has witnessed remarkable growth from 2021 to 2024, solidifying its role as a leading publication in psychiatric and mental health research in Pakistan. Under the current editorial leadership, JPPS has expanded its reach, improved indexing, enhanced its editorial policies, and eliminated financial barriers to publication. Key achievements include recognition by major academic and medical bodies, strategic collaborations, and active participation in global psychiatric forums. Despite these strides, challenges such as maintaining rigorous peer review, securing sustainable funding, and fostering diversity persist. Looking ahead, JPPS aims to enhance its digital presence, focus on emerging psychiatric domains, and strengthen engagement with the psychiatric community. While this editorial reflects on the transformative journey of JPPS, it also paves the way for future innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity in psychiatric publishing. The full editorial highlights these aspects, outlining the roadmap for JPPS's continued evolution.

**KEYWORDS**

Editorial Policies; Leadership; Mental Health; Pakistan; Peer Review; Publication; Research.

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the period of four years (2021 to 2024), the Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society (JPPS) has undergone momentous growth and transformation. This editorial aims to provide an overview of JPPS' accomplishments, challenges, and future directions.

**JPPS GROWTH AND IMPACT**

Since the handing over the baton to the present Editor-in-Chief and his Editorial Team, the Journal has seen a steady increase in submissions, readership, and impact. We have published a diverse range of articles across various fields of psychiatry and allied mental health disciplines, contributing not only to the advancement of knowledge in mental health but also its dissemination.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1. Expansion and Modification of Editorial Board:** We have successfully expanded our editorial board to include experts from around the globe, ensuring diverse perspectives and rigorous peer review processes, as required by Pakistan Medical and Dental Council-PMDC (at least 25% foreign board members). The changes to the Editorial and Advisory Board were made to facilitate contributions by active clinicians and key researchers with regards to the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) policy (no publication by editorial board members) and PMDC.
- 2. Journal Policies:** A detailed document with information about the journal, its aims and scope, ownership, funding, author and peer review instructions, along with editorial policies, was developed as per policies and recommendations of HEC, PMDC and international criteria. This document has been added to the official website [www.jpss.pk](http://www.jpss.pk)
- 3. Fees:** Under the current editorship, JPSS has removed all sorts of fees (article processing, submission, etc.) to facilitate mental health research and publication without financial bias. There is also no subscription fee.
- 4. Peer-Review Facilitation:** Peer-review guidelines along with instructions and a structured form have been incorporated for the assistance of peer reviewer's comments on the journal's website.
- 5. Journal's Appearance and Content:** The current Editorial Team redesigned the journal's presentation by changing the cover layout with the front-cover illustrating a more centralised global vision theme using artwork by multidisciplinary talented individuals, and the back-cover was utilised for details about the journal, including its ownership, aim, scope and article types accepted. The Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB) of Scopus appreciated the presentation of JPSS in its evaluation for Scopus indexation. The layout of the manuscripts was not only visually enhanced but DOIs (Digital Object Identifier) were added to articles from 2021 onwards, and incorporated copyright & Licensing statements to all published material beginning from October 2023.  
The categories of articles welcomed were also broadened to include two new sections, namely: Trainees' Perspective for postgraduate psychiatry residents and Spotlight to feature mental health services, policy, training and research.
- 6. Recognition and Indexation:** JPSS is recognised by HEC (3rd application submitted), PMDC (3rd application) and by College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP). The journal has updated indexation in WHO Index Medicus (IMEMR), Pakmedinet, Google Scholar, whereas earlier cataloguing in Weill Cornell Medicine, National Library of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University of Medicine indexing with old website and submission information have been added to the updated webpage. Most recently Crossref was joined as member, which provides DOIs (Digital Object Identifier) for each article.  
As per recent policy of CPSP (notification dated: 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024), the trainees of FCPS

must publish research article in HEC recognized journals instead of the previous requirement of dissertation for the fellowship Part -II examination, and JPPS encourages manuscript submission from postgraduate residents, that too without any processing or publication charges. It is worth noting that JPPS Editorial Team anticipated this and initiated organizing of workshops and sessions dedicated to the importance of research and publication at various national and international conferences held in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Sukkur, Islamabad (<https://www.pppsycon2024.com/program.php>) and London (UK) (<https://pulsepakistan.com/global-symposium-sets-a-metamorphic-course-for-health-wellbeing-education-research-collaboration/>).

7. **Collaboration Initiatives:** We fostered a collaboration with the renowned organisation, World Psychiatric Association (WPA) by being the official publication partner for the WPA Thematic Congress 2023 in Karachi, thus facilitating knowledge exchange and dissemination. The Editorial Team of JPPS was a major contributor in the Scientific Committee for this event where the editor-in-chief was entrusted the Chair. Similar offers for partnership were made for other Pakistan Psychiatric Society (PPS) conferences.
8. **Increased Visibility:** The journal's stature has been enhanced through updated indexation, active participation and networking in PPS conferences (workshops, sessions and stalls), WPA thematic Congress 2023 in Karachi (workshop, session, complimentary journal distribution with JPPS bookmarks & abstract book design), social media engagement (Facebook, X-Twitter, and Instagram) and strategic marketing efforts (pharmaceutical collaborations). Additionally, Video Abstracts were introduced to increase visibility, impact, engage viewers and readership among social-media users (<https://youtu.be/UUZhp7Yq3qk?si=7C2xnVeq4IHxvDH8>).
9. **Dedicated Staff and Office:** As per requirements of the national and international recognition bodies, a specific office space with qualified staff was established and inaugurated by the then President of WPA, PPS senior representatives, and Mr. Younis Khan SI, renowned national hero and former Pakistan Cricket Team Captain (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/945455-younis-khan-offers-to-spread-awareness-of-mental-health-issues>).
10. **Updated Website and Archives:** Currently we are paying to maintain 02 websites i.e., OJS (open journal system [www.jpps.pk](http://www.jpps.pk) & site for JPPS archives before Non-OJS [www.jpps.com.pk](http://www.jpps.com.pk)). Although, we updated both sites but to overcome the financial constraints and the confusion caused during PMDC evaluation of JPPS, we hired the services of IT and other experts to upload the pre-OJS application archives to the current OJS integrated website.

## CHALLENGES

1. **Maintaining Quality:** Ensuring the quality and consistency of published articles with increasing submissions has been an ongoing challenge. We have implemented robust peer review processes and editorial guidelines to address this issue.
2. **Peer Review Process:** Engaging dedicated reviewers, ensuring timely reviews and responding to reviewer comments are a few of the major obstacles in maintaining the effectiveness and the standard of the peer review process. There is a need to properly recognize and incentivise the peer reviewers of the journal.
3. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Despite our strides in diversifying our editorial board and content, we recognise the need for further efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in psychiatric, behavioural sciences and mental health research and publication in Pakistan. There is also a need for keen glocal (global + local) reviewers. It was indeed a challenge to fulfil the HEC and PMDC Criteria for article acceptance, to exclude manuscripts from the members of the editorial team and publishing authority. This restriction has resulted in the loss of valuable potential contributors from the meagre number of psychiatrists in Pakistan.
4. **Funding and Resources:** JPPS currently lacks dedicated funding from its owner and publisher, PPS. The society has also yet to amend its constitution to declare JPPS as sub-entity of Pakistan Psychiatric Society, so that it may independently and transparently conduct its financial transactions. The absence of proper funding has also resulted in JPPS solely depending on print advertisements for revenue resources and all expenditure, such as dedicated office space, full-time staff, web hosting & maintenance, printing, and paid membership for Crossref and DOIs.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- **Innovation in Publishing:** Embracing technological advancements and exploring new publishing models to enhance accessibility, interactivity, and engagement with our readers, authors, and reviewers.
- **Focus on Emerging Areas:** Prioritising and encouraging submissions in emerging areas in psychiatry, such as digital mental health, neurodiversity, and global mental health disparities.
- **Community Engagement:** Strengthening JPPS's engagement with the glocal psychiatric and mental health community through webinars, workshops, and collaborative initiatives to foster knowledge sharing and professional development.
- 4. **Inclusion of Medical Students and Trainee Psychiatrists:** Ensure dedicated sections for medics and future psychiatrists by encouraging early-career contributions as case reports, reflections and commentary on issues unique to their setting, mental health awareness advocacy and policy recommendations for training programmes.

5. **Dedicated Pages for Pakistan Psychiatric Society (PPS) Events:** Create a recurring section in each issue to highlight PPS conferences, workshops (teaching and trainings), and symposia. Publish abstracts and key highlights from major PPS events, fostering greater engagement from members.
6. **Impact & Indexation:** For the attainment of prestigious indexation, the requirements have been fulfilled for Scopus/Web of Sciences. This cataloguing shall result in increased visibility and citations of the JPPS content by prolific renowned researchers, leading to an impact factor and eventually be replaced by the novel diversity factor as “The Journal Impact Factor, as calculated by Thomson Reuters\*, was originally created as a tool to help librarians identify journals to purchase, not as a measure of the scientific quality of research in an article.” (<https://sfdora.org/read/>)

In this regard, the new editorial team is advised to have the following essential points in mind: Editor and Editorial Board Member affiliations, geographic diversity (diversity of the editorial team in terms of local–cum-international representation), and publication records must be consistent with the stated scope and published content of the journal. The size and composition of the Editorial Board must be consistent with the volume and breadth of publication output. All the members should have sound their ORCID, institutional emails Due consideration should also be given to employ full-time professional editors.

However, the glocal policymakers (Local: HEC & PMDC; Global: Web of Sciences & Scopus) should encourage genuine research and publication through logical and practical policies, considering the ground realities of the meagre resourced LMICs.

## CONCLUSION

During the four years, the Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society has made significant strides in Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences in Pakistan and the promotion mental health. As we look towards the future, we are committed to furthering our mission of disseminating contemporary research, fostering collaboration, and promoting mental health equity worldwide. These reflections are a testament of the dedication and contributions of our editorial team, reviewers, authors, and readers that have helped in shaping the success of JPPS as a trailblazer in the field mental health in Pakistan.