

CORRESPONDENCE

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INDEXING THE JPPS?

Dear Sir,

The launch of the website of the Journal of the Pakistan Psychiatric Association marks an important step forward. The editor is to be congratulated warmly for his tireless efforts to disseminate psychiatric research in Pakistan. I am particularly pleased that the full contents of the journal are freely accessible for all readers, regardless of their geographical location. This will make the website a valuable resource for mental health practitioners and researchers in the region, and far beyond. Mental health professionals in low-income countries are too often deprived from evidence that could help them to improve their daily work. Freely available peer reviewed information on the internet could be of great value for them, while researchers and health policymakers may equally benefit from interactive feedback from readers¹.

Most (90%) of all published mental health research is being done in high income countries, with only 13% of the world's population living in these countries. Mental health research from countries, representing 87% of the world's population countries, counts for less than 10% of articles in internationally accessible health literature². There is growing consensus that active efforts are required to improve the mental health research situation in low- and middle-income countries³. One of the recommended actions is to increase the number of mental health journals from low-income countries in international indexing systems⁴.

Would it be possible to get the Journal of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society indexed, so that the articles can be easily traced from search engines as PubMed and Psych-Info? I believe the current standard of the journal would certainly justify such a step. This would greatly encourage colleagues from Pakistan and abroad contribute to your journal.

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JPPS AND RESEARCH IN PAKISTAN

Dear Sir,

It is indeed a red letter day for the entire community of psychiatrist in Pakistan that Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society (JPPS) has been registered with 'Medlip' and other regional databases. Journal's own website is also quite a remarkable achievement considering the shambles in which most of our societies are. I feel the editor and his team can take the credit for good things done so far. Nevertheless they should not let the praise get to their heads. It does not matter what we think about ourselves rather what others think about us should concern us.

Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society has a long way to go as far as international community of sciences is concerned. Indexing in the Index Medicus or MedLine should naturally be next step. This will require raising the bar as far as methodological robustness and quality of scientific publications are concerned.

It is eye opening to note that during a period of 10 years (1993-2004) only 108 publication have appeared from Pakistan in Indexed journals (77.8% Medline, 22.2% psychInfo). There were only 43 individuals, actively involved in the research; among these 34 were psychiatrists. There was only one Randomized Control Trial (RCT) from the whole country. The mean country based im-

pact factor (IF) of these studies is 2.75. This speaks about the dismal state of mental health research in Pakistan. It is also evident that research in high-income countries is not easily transferable or appropriate for use in low and middle-income countries

If research capacity is to be strengthened than we need to take serious initiatives at individual, institutional and national levels. Young and committed bread of researchers needs to be developed. Training in Epidemiology, basic Bio-statistics, Research protocol and scientific writing needs to be incorporated in the post-graduate training programs. The Gaussian ghost needs to be exorcised from the clinicians. At institutional level researchers should be freed from mundane administrative responsibilities with adequate remunerations and protected research time. Linkages should be developed with international research organizations like International Clinical epidemiological network (INCLEN), Cochrane collaboration etc. These efforts should be grounded in personal and collective integrity. Stakes are very high with clinicians facing the dilemma of 'publish or perish'.

Less than 10% of global spending on health research is devoted to diseases or conditions that account for 90 % of the global disease burden; so published by the Global forum reports since 1998¹. In order to correct the 10/90 gap efforts are required to focus on diseases representing the heaviest burden on the world's health and facilitating collaboration between partners in both the public and private sectors besides a unified National research agenda.

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STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS IN THE ONSET OF DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

Dear Sir,

I have gone through the current issue of the Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society (Vol 2 Number 2, July 2005) and found it very informative and thought provok-

ing. The articles published in the issue are of high standard and reflect great efforts on the part of researchers and the authors. It is heartening to know that the quality of articles has improved tremendously as compared to the previous issues and it is hoped that under your able editorship and concerted efforts of the other members of the editorial board, this esteemed journal will soon become the leading source of publication for the mental health professionals of this region.

I read with great interest the review article "Stressful life events in the onset of dissociative disorders" by Saddiqua Aamir as it encompasses all the relevant contributory factors in the causation of this enigmatic disorder. The author has tried to search and research various important studies carried out in this field and has put the major findings in a systematic, concise and understandable way. I agree with her that this disorder is now relatively uncommon in industrialized nations: that is why few studies could be found. I think this disorder is still common in developing countries like ours: more so in the rural community. This highlights the need to study this condition further especially in our subjects keeping in view our peculiar psychosocial stressors and life events.

Ahmad Farjam

Lt. Col.
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Reply

These letters raise important issues in relation to the journal. It is indeed gratifying to note that the journal is being 'noticed'; something which every editor wants. That it is being appreciated and the contents are relevant to the readers' interest, is very much heartening for all of us in the editorial board. The editorial team deserves the praise.

However, we at the editorial board realize that the journal has still a long way to go. We have initiated the process for indexation of the journal in other major international databases. However, it is a slow process. (It appears we are progressing at the rate of one database per month !) You will soon have more good news.

The authors also point to a now well known 10/90 divide in medical literature. Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society is committed to bridge this gap. This is evident from the articles from India and other developing countries. However, this needs more concerted effort. Being encouraged by the experience of Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society (and also having been at the receiving end of the divide personally many times), I throw the challenge to the academia in developing countries, why not a journal of Mental Health in Developing Countries (JMHDG)!