

## The Recent Surge in Medical Research Journalism in Pakistan: A Boon or Bane?

Najma Baseer\*

*Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, Khyber Medical University,  
Peshawar Pakistan*

Medical research journalism in Pakistan has lately seen a significant rise, resulting in an increase in public engagement with health and science updates across the globe. Numerous causes, including increasing faculty productivity because of their professional and personal development and the abundance of national and international funding opportunities in medical research, have contributed to this notable surge. As a result, Pakistani researchers now have an additional platform for publishing and disseminating their work, raising their profile and fostering more regional and international collaborations. This is further complemented by the fact that, despite stringent indexation criteria drawn at the national level by both the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), many universities have started their journals in an anticipation to enhance their university rankings. Owing to these academic, technological and societal causes, Pakistan's medical journalism industry has grown quickly, presenting both opportunities and challenges in the field. Further, a critical analysis of this phenomenon poses the question: is this surge a boon or bane for the country's medical and scientific fraternity? This editorial will discuss both views shaping the landscape for the medical journalism in Pakistan.

With regards to opportunities, the increased number of medical journals in Pakistan has substantially boosted the local as well as global outreach. The growth of medical research journalism has made scientific knowledge more accessible to a wider audience, enabling researchers to share their results with medical professionals and public in general.<sup>1</sup> Since new research hits a vast audience, an increase in the research output may result in better outcomes for healthcare since healthcare practitioners are kept informed with the latest advancements and best practices through these research publications. This visibility has not only elevated the profile of Pakistani researchers but has also opened a gateway towards international collaboration and funding.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, this recent outburst has promoted the interdisciplinary approach, which has brought together various experts to deal with complex health related problems locally, moving the complex scientific research into public realm. Hence the

public now is more aware of their health issues, medical development and prevention strategies.<sup>2</sup>

A focus on medical journalism has also encouraged the local research initiatives. A culture of more scientific inquisitiveness is established among the researchers as they see their work getting published and valued by these journals. These practices are significant in sustaining a health research environment. Numerous medical journals also allow emerging researchers to publish their work, get recognition and boost their academic careers. This approach encourages the budding health professionals to inculcate ethical research practices and promotes evidence based medicine.<sup>1-3</sup> Such ethical practices and evidence based research plays a vital role in driving the policy making and health reforms by the concerned regulatory bodies.<sup>1,4</sup>

On the flipside, this plethora of medical journalism in Pakistan questions the quality and credibility of the disseminated research. Misinformation and a growing need for stern peer review have been hot topics in medical journalism concerning Pakistan.<sup>2,5,6</sup> The unrestricted proliferation of medical journals brings the potential risk of spreading false or misleading information, which may have dire consequences on public health. Furthermore, issues relating to plagiarism, duplicate publications, gift or ghost authorships, peer pressures and lack of a proper peer review practices are on a significant rise.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, a strict oversight and accountability is needed to curb these malpractices.<sup>2,7</sup>

The sustainability of this surge requires significant investment of resources to maintain the high standards of medical journalism.<sup>4</sup> This is also a concern as most of the journals are understaffed and are facing the problem of inadequate funding, in addition to strict demands to be indexed internationally.<sup>4,5</sup> Hence making it challenging for these journals to maintain the same level of quality and standards. Therefore there is a need for more robust infrastructure and support for the editorial staff through

\*For Correspondence

**Dr. Najma Baseer**

Associate Professor  
Anatomy, Institute of  
Basic Medical Sciences,  
Khyber Medical  
University  
Peshawar, Pakistan.

Email:

[drnajma.ibms@kmu.edu.pk](mailto:drnajma.ibms@kmu.edu.pk)

The editorial may be cited as Baseer N. The recent surge in medical research journalism in Pakistan: A Boon or Bane? *Adv Basic Sci* 2025; 8(2): 49-50

regulatory frameworks that can vouch for the credibility and the quality assurance of the medical journals.<sup>4,5,8</sup>

In the nutshell, the growth of medical research journalism in Pakistan, that has taken off in recent times can be viewed by the success yardstick as both blessing and a curse. On the bright side, this surge has improved the visibility of local health issues and their solutions, enhanced public awareness and has led to local research mobilization. However, the challenges in ensuring the quality, sustainability and ethics of the process cannot be overlooked. The key to tackle the related issues and encourage good practices is via adopting a balanced perspective. It is essential to enhance the interactions among the researchers, journalists and policymakers to ensure maximum benefit. Addressing these challenges promptly by the concerned stakeholders should help unlock the full potential of medical research journalism in Pakistan, thus making it a powerful tool for scientific advancement and improvement in public health.

## REFERENCES

1. Jawaid SA. A collaborative effort to promote medical journalism in Pakistan. Pak J Med Sci. 2007;23(3):305-7.
2. Sohail S. Challenges in medical journalism : Reflections from the year past Challenges in Medical Journalism: Reflections from the Year Past ! J Coll Physicians Surg Pak. 2020;30(1):2-3.
3. Sherin A. Medical journalism in Pakistan: where do we stand ? J Postgrad Med Inst. 2008;24(3):171-3.
4. Sherin A. The Road Less Traveled : Nurturing A Medical Journal ' s Quest for International Indexation and Impact Factor. Ann King Edward Med Univ. 2023;29(02):75-7.
5. Jawaid SA. Problems faced by editors of peer reviewed medical journals. Saudi Med J [Internet]. 2004 Jan;25(1 Suppl):S21-5.
6. Ahmed Badar. Problems faced by a medical journal editor. J Ayub Med Coll. 2006;18(2):1-3.
7. Jawaid SA. Simultaneous submission and duplicate publication : Curse and a menace which needs to be checked. Pakistan J Med Sci. 2005;21(3):245-8.
8. Sherin A. Role of regulatory bodies in improving the quality of Medical journals of Pakistan. Khyber Med Univ J 2015;145-6.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

*Author declared no conflict of interest*

### GRANT SUPPORT & FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

*Author declared no specific grant for this research from any funding agency in the public, commercial or non-profit sectors*

### Author

**NB:** Conception, Design of the work, Data collection, and Drafting, Reviewed, Final approval, Agreement to be accountable



"Readers may "Share-copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format" and "Adapt-remix, transform, and build upon the material". The readers must give appropriate credit to the source of the material and indicate if changes were made to the material. Readers may not use the material for commercial purpose. The readers may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits."

ABMS web address: [www.abms.kmu.edu.pk](http://www.abms.kmu.edu.pk)

Email address: [abms@kmu.edu.pk](mailto:abms@kmu.edu.pk)