A Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Invest your Scientific Research in National Journals

With the launch of this first issue of the *Journal of Digestive Endoscopy*, its Editorial Board and Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy of India (SGEI) feel honoured, and humbled. Indeed, it is a great privilege to see the fulfillment of this dream. Obviously, such an event is a milestone in the history of any Society. All this has been achieved thanks to the hard work, and sincere and outstanding efforts of the editorial board, reviewers, authors, and support staff.

After a series of hiccups over many years, Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy of India finally decided to launch its own mouthpiece “the *Journal of Digestive Endoscopy*” as its official publication. This landmark decision was taken during the Governing Body Meeting of SGEI held on the sidelines of 10th Annual Conference of SGEI at Hyderabad. I was immensely pleased to learn that Governing Council under the astitute leadership of President, Dr Rakesh Kochhar, Professor of Gastroenterology at PGI Chandigarh and the Secretary, Dr Mahesh Goenka, Director Apollo Hospital Kolkata have assigned me this prestigious but daunting task of editorship of this new publication. I am highly grateful to the President, Secretary and Governing Council members for imposing their trust in me. Yes, it is indeed a great challenge for any editor to launch a new journal successfully with full satisfaction of its readers. But I am sure with the cooperation of nearly one thousand members of SGEI who are committed to the cause of highest standards of modern endoscopy and towards improving health care, my job is bound to be simple, educative, enjoyable and productive.

Journals are expected to provide a medium for scholarly discourse, sharing means of information, experience, skills and innovations, and dissemination of knowledge and practices. This all can be achieved through integrated scientific research, the results of which lead to the generation of knowledge and the translation of knowledge into policy and practice. I think it’s high time to recognize national medical journals as a source of imparting medical knowledge and improving health care. The editor is responsible for the entire contents of the journal and has an endeavor of ensuring the publication of a reliable, educative and readable journal, produced in accordance with the stated aims of the journal. From the perspective of the editor, the quality of the papers submitted and the number of people who read and cite the contents of the journal is more important than merely publishing the journal. Although more than 100 medical journals are published from India, but how often a single paper is quoted even from our indexed journals in their international counterparts. Unfortunately, Indian scientists rarely invest their original high-quality research work in Indian journals, which they publish in foreign journals due to their high impact factors and credibility. It helps them to reach out to their peers in the scientific field. India boasts of being the third largest scientific and technical manpower in the world. But the scientific research output of India is rated lower than most of the European countries, including Spain and The Netherlands. Recent publications (1–2) prove that the impact factor of Indian journals is falling and *Science Citation Index* (SCI) listing includes only one dozen Indian journals amongst 5000 or more selected from all over the world. Obviously, this indifferent attitude towards our own journals is bound to lower standards of our journals and they will never attain scientific importance. The result is that high-quality research articles are rarely seen in Indian journals. All of us should take a pledge and strive to change this gloomy scenario. Indian authors should invest their scientific research in national journals as well.

Are international journals really serving the needs of developing countries?. The answer is an emphatic “no” because they are not international in their editorial boards, contents or readership. Majority of the articles published in these journals focus on issues and needs primarily concerning to the developed world. The issues related to developing countries are greatly under represented largely for reasons other than science. Under these circumstances the importance of having good-quality national medical journals cannot be overemphasized. Given that “international” journals are not so international after all, it is logical that we must come forward to fulfill the needs of developing countries. National journals should legitimately offer opportunities for articles on issues that are of importance to the audiences outside of the West, create a forum for local expertise, and add context to research results generated in the West. The management of national journals should enhance national as well as international visibility of the journal by creating websites and free open-access versions of their articles.
I am fully aware of the fact that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to sustain the publication of a newly launched journal especially from a developing country in terms of educational value, scientific contents and practice guidelines. The factors leading to this situation include lack of funding, irregular publication schedules, poorly written manuscripts, weak peer-review mechanisms that lack credibility, and poor local and international visibility. Yet, the most important reason as already stated and needs to be reemphasised is the tendency of researchers of developing countries to ignore national journals. Not only this hampers the development of medicine in our country but also results of many pioneering researches become inaccessible to the majority of researchers, clinicians, and health policy makers in developing countries in view of high subscription costs for journals (printed as well as online) of developed countries.

India is no longer a developing country but has been making giant strides into the league of developed nations. Indeed, high quality research of colossal magnitude is being carried out in India today. We are second to none in the areas of medical research. We, the medical fraternity cannot absolve ourselves from contributing our share. Technological advances in endoscopy have opened new avenues for improving and saving human lives as well as ‘markets’ for the companies. Globalization being the buzzword, and constantly improving health of Indian economy, every attempt should be made to expand and integrate this new market. India is quite resourceful in human manpower of high quality in all walks of life and there is no dearth of national stars in the field of GI endoscopy. Our national stars have carved a niche at the international scene and should become role models in making the Journal of Digestive Endoscopy a scientific journal of repute by in investing their publication in this journal. We have to take lessons from Muslim countries, Japan and China. Muslim world which includes Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and some others dominated science and technology for over 600 years went into oblivion when they divorced science about 800 years back and the present industrialized world took it over. Despite following a non-democratic model of governance, the secret of great success of Chinese economy in a short span of time lies in their potential to embrace science and technology, and strengthening their own institutions. Our medical fraternity should take a leaf out of their Japanese and Chinese counterparts who are never shy of publishing their revered research in their national journals. This has ensured high standards of medicine and health care in these countries. India is not expected to march alongside the developed world unless we promote and strengthen our own institutions. The unprecedented progress made by our scientists in the field of information technology should serve as a torch bearer for us. Therefore, governments, universities, and professional associations should value the importance of national journals and invest in their sustainability.

The first issue of our journal is available in print but efforts are on to make it available online. I plan to make our journal online right from next issue so that one could simply log into a Web site and download a file. Making the journal visible on the internet would increase its potential to have a more local as well as global distribution. My sincere effort would be to get it indexed in the major indexing services as soon as possible. These goals cannot be achieved without your active, meaningful and sincere participation.

Finally, I appeal and invite all authors and readers to contact me at showkatzzargar6@gmail.com or J.digestiveendoscopy@gmail.com to share their comments and views. Their advice on how to further improve the journal’s value to the wider research community in knowledge and data, and how to keep enhancing the value of J Dig Endos to its authors and readers will be well taken and appreciated. I would like to invite well-recognized researchers in the field of GI endoscopy to serve on the Editorial Board. Apart from online discussions with Editorial Board, I also intend to start an annual Editorial Board meeting at one or two major conferences, so that the members of the Editorial Board and other doctors will share their views and discuss their experiences, concerns and insights. I also plan to have two or three Associate Editors soon to achieve our goals, deal with papers and ensure high standards of the journal which we strive to maintain. As you know the journal will be published quarterly (January, April, July, and October), my effort would be to push for a target turnaround time of two months from submission to decision by keeping regular reminders to reviewers.

I acknowledge with gratitude and sincerity the consistent and great efforts put in by Dr. Mahesh Goenka, Secretary SGEI in realization of this dream. I am also thankful to Mr. Farooq Ahmad Nadaf, Mr. Gulzar Ahmad and my son Dr. Abid Shoukat for their untiring efforts in designing, editing, and compiling this journal.

References


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