

Editorial

A Decade-long Journey of Publishing Janaki Medical College Journal of Medical Sciences (JMCJMS): Experiences from the field

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Keywords: Decade, establishment, JMCJMS, managing editor, peer review, publication,

The year 2023 marks an important milestone for the Janaki Medical College Journal of Medical Sciences (JMCJMS) as the journal's 10th anniversary of continuous publishing. JMCJMS is an English-language, peer-reviewed journal publishing original articles from different disciplines and predominantly from pre-clinical and clinical medical sciences which is published by the Department of Research and Publication, Janaki Medical College [1]. It serves as a platform to bring experts from various fields, including health sectors concerned with social and public

policy, epidemiology, public health, global health, health management, and health policy, in a dynamic academic atmosphere. In order to promote collaboration and knowledge sharing within the research and healthcare delivery systems, the journal aims to foster effective communication among policymakers, health system researchers, decision-makers, legislators, practitioners, educators, administrators, students, and allied health professionals. As JMCJMS approaches its tenth-year mark of continuous publication, I believe that it is time to evaluate the achievements during this period.

Establishment of JMCJMS

At the end of 2012, Prof. Kshitiz Upadhyay Dhungel took the lead towards the establishment of JMCJMS in the Department of Research and Publication at Janaki Medical College. The inaugural editorial team of JMCJMS was formed with seven editorial members, one executive editor, and Editor-in-Chief Prof. Dr. Damodar Pradhan (Table 1).

Table 1: Inaugural Editorial Team of JMCJMS (2013)	
Prof. Damodar Pradhan Editor-in-chief Janaki Medical College Janakpurdham, Nepal	Assoc. Prof. Kshitiz Upadhyay-Dhungel Executive Editor Janaki Medical College Janakpurdham, Nepal
Editorial Members	
Prof. P. Ravi Shankar , Editor, Xavier University School of Medicine, Oranjestad, Aruba	
Prof. Rano Mal Piryani , Editor, Kist Medical College, Lalitpur, Nepal	
Prof. Pawan Kumar Lal Das , Editor, Kist Medical College, Lalitpur, Nepal	
Assoc. Prof. Orawan Buranruk , Editor, Khon Kaen University, Thailand	
Assoc. Prof. Rakesh Kumar Pandit , Editor, Janaki Medical College, Janakpurdham, Nepal	
Assoc. Prof. Kapil H. Agrawal , Editor, Janaki Medical College, Janakpurdham, Nepal	
Asst. Prof. Zhao Chen , Editor, Renji Medical College, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai	

The editorial board of JMCJMS was small but energetic and full of enthusiasm. As I recall, I received a request and offer from the executive editor to join the editorial board as managing editor. As I had no prior expertise with journals and was quite new to writing and academic publishing at the time; I hesitated to approach the position of managing editor but assured him of all the support and help in journal management. He replied in his evergreen style, *"Ok, it's finished now."*

As an executive editor, he moved forward with all the responsibilities of JMCJMS. After completing all the official formalities for the first issue of JMCJMS, I was given the task of reference editing and language editing of the manuscripts for the first issue following the author guidelines of JMCJMS strictly. As a novice, I found that to be difficult and challenging for me. But I was young; I was hungry, and full of eagerness to shape myself simply by the *"learning-by-doing method."* The thank-you note from the executive editor greatly encouraged me to handle my

obligations outside of the editorial board. One editorial, seven research articles, and two short communications made up the first edition of JMCJMS in 2013, which was published online on NepJOL and also printed with hard copies by Janaki Medical College. The hard copies were sent to libraries of all the medical colleges of Nepal. The two issues of the JMCJMS for 2013 were successfully released with one interesting editorial *"Teaching the cat to learn"* which I liked most and was cited a lot. The efforts of the inaugural editorial team to bring out these issues are memorable to me.

Indirectly contributing to the 2013 and 2014 issues, I was in the learning phase in activities of the Journal, and it allowed me to gain a lot of knowledge, information, and understanding of publishing ethics and standards in scientific publication. In 2015, I joined the editorial team and accepted the position of managing editor. JMCJMS began to grow steadily and changes in the editorial team took place (Table 2). The primary objective of the new editorial team

Table 2: **Editorial Team (2015-2023) [3]**

Editor-in-Chief
Prof. Kshitiz Upadhyay-Dhungel Department of Physiology, Janaki Medical College, Janakpurdham, Nepal
Editorial Members
Prof. P. Ravi Shankar , International Medical University, Bukit Jalil Kuala Lumpur Malaysia
Prof. Rano Mal Piryani , Bilawal Medical College, Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan
Assoc. Prof. Mrigendra Amatya , Nepal Medical College, Kathmandu, Nepal
Assoc. Prof. Orawan Buranruk , Khon Kaen University, Thailand
Assoc. Prof. Amod Sharma , College of Medical and Health Sciences, Wollega University, Ethiopia
Assoc. Prof. Jitendra Kumar Singh , Janaki Medical College, Janakpurdham, Nepal
Asst. Prof. Zhao Chen , Renji Medical College, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China
Asst. Prof. Nabin Lageju , Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Nepal Police Hospital, Kathmandu
Asst. Prof. Banodita Acharya , Think Tank Foundation, Kathmandu, Nepal
Managing Editor
Assoc. Prof. Satyam Prakash Department of Biochemistry, Janaki Medical College, Janakpurdham, Nepal

was to be free of any influences on the processing of articles, in accordance with Editorial freedom as defined by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and maintaining the publishing standards in the scientific community of medical Journals [2].

Trends of manuscript submissions in JMCJMS

In the early phase, we faced a lot of challenges in getting good quality scientific manuscripts, and the editors had to work hard to nourish and nurture the manuscripts. Poor English was often encountered in many manuscripts with weak presentations. Later, JMCJMS started receiving good-quality manuscripts and the number of published articles steadily increased over the years. It is obvious that most articles published at this point originated from Janaki Medical College and different medical colleges of Nepal, and India

and only a small proportion of articles were from abroad. A total of 304 manuscripts were submitted to JMCJMS. Out of the total, 212 manuscripts in different categories were accepted and published in previous years, as shown in Fig 1.

Challenges faced in handling scheduled publication

As managing editor, it was my duty to be always aware of the planned publication of JMCJMS. In accordance with Journal publishing and practicing standards, all the articles submitted to JMCJMS should have to go through a two-round review process. One must be conducted by the editorial team as a preliminary assessment to ensure compliance with JMCJMS standards and guidelines, and the other was a peer review by two expert peers. As is the practice with most prestigious journals, we have a rigorous process for considering manuscripts.

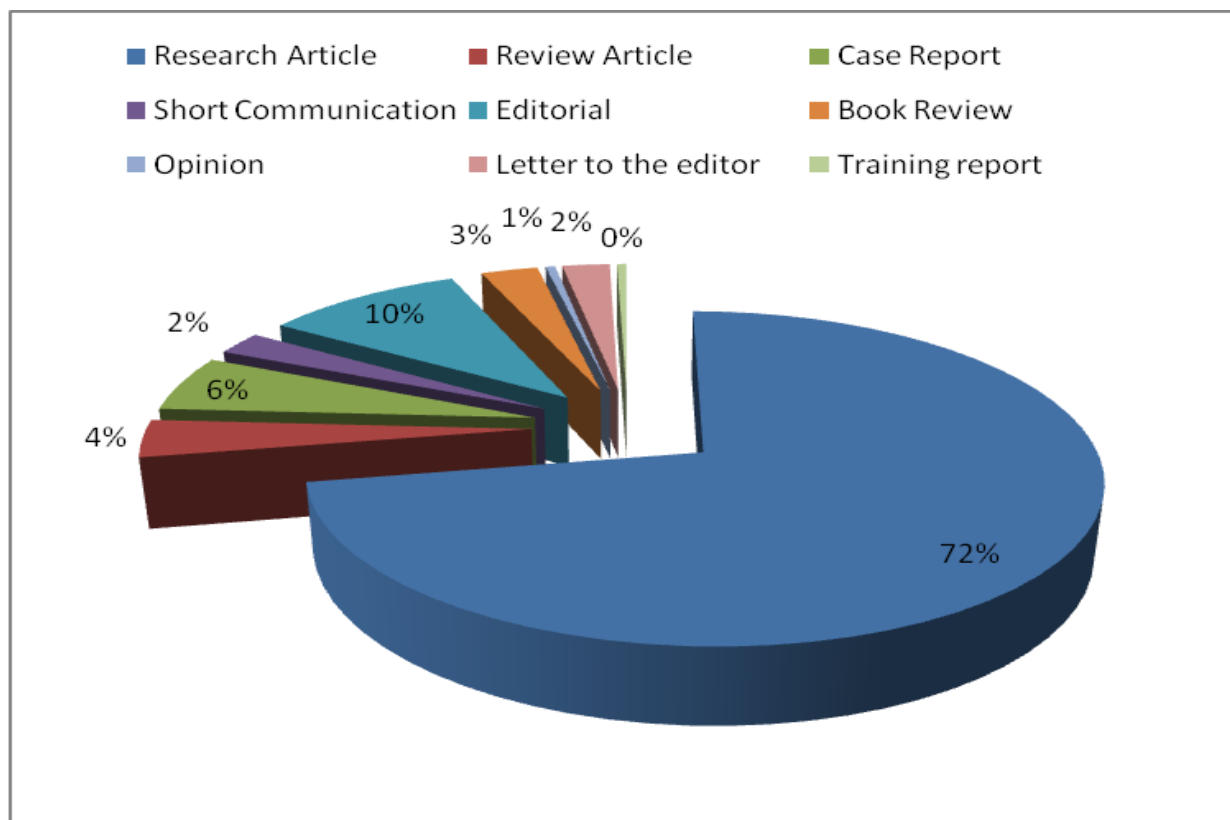


Fig 1: Type of articles published in JMCJMS.

Submissions are first directed to a managing editor for a preliminary review to ensure they adhere to the standards and policies of JMCJMS. In the first round, plagiarism check and detail requirements such as confirmation that ethics approval was provided by a recognized committee or review board, relevant permissions were provided to secure and analyze data, Author Statement and Agreement, Cover letter and referencing style conforms to JMCJMS practices. An initial scrutiny guarantees that submissions are sound and that authors have complied with JMCJMS requirements, which are explicitly stated in the website's instructions. In the second-round peer review process, the Editor-in-Chief/Managing editor then decides whether to send a manuscript out for review. Peer review is at the heart of the processes of

not just medical journals but of all of science [4]. For a small journal coming from the scientific periphery, the review process itself is burdened with problems of making a pool of reliable reviewers, subjectivity of assessment, and shortage of objective criteria. Choosing a trustworthy reviewer has always been difficult for me, and giving the Peers their work to do was one of the more difficult aspects. I was always concerned about giving our peer reviewers enough time while being lenient with deadlines but uncompromising with quality. I had to wait for the author's modifications and the reviewers' final confirmation and decision from the Peer Reviewer towards publication. As for the author gallery proof, I also got no answer from the many authors which paused the publication process. Also, it was quite

amusing to see authors returning manuscripts occasionally without making any changes. The manuscripts were then returned to the author once more, which may have delayed publication. I never intended to compromise the quality of manuscripts.

Due to the deadline-driven strain of publication, I frequently became impatient on holidays and when reviewers and authors took longer than expected to respond. The author's response towards modification and the reviewer's approval of the revised manuscript is also occasionally delayed. With reasonable expectations, I thought that the work was moving forward but was out of my control. I had to hold out. Throughout this voyage, I've noticed some manuscripts were not processed after a preliminary review, some were withdrawn after review, some were rejected after author's modification, and also some were withdrawn because of publication's urgency by the author. Sometimes, the content of the manuscript was not suitable for the consideration of publication, and it required the final decision of the editor-in-chief and the editorial board.

Poorly presented abstract and title, flawed study design, plagiarism, inappropriate research question and hypothesis, poor selection of statistical tests, being too verbose about study results, disorganized writing style with too many grammatical and syntax errors, and poor presentation of tables and figures are some of the main flaws as reasons for rejection of manuscripts [5]. Rejecting a manuscript from JMCJMS has always been disappointing because authors put a lot of effort into their research. However, it is the managing editor and the editor-in-chief who

must implement quality control measures before publishing.

On top of dealing with reviewing, evaluating, and responding to authors with tact and diplomacy, writing editorials that draw the content of the issue together has always been the priority of JMCJMS. Considering this, Prof. Dr. P. Ravi Shankar has my sincere gratitude as managing editor for more than just his time and all the editorial contributions. Most of the time, when situations were chaotic, I emailed him for his insightful criticisms, editorials, and advice on publishing standards and ethics as well as specific sections and guidance on the articles. His prompt response to my email has been a blessing for me during this endeavor and is always an obligation for me. Moreover, the handling of the author guidelines, peer review, reviewers' judgment, editing, layout, uploading issues for online publication, preservation of the document, storage system, access to the publication, indexing of the publication, and visibility of the document have all been a part and parcel of my JMCJMS journey.

On the other hand, unusual pressures from colleagues, authors, and occasionally from authorities towards publication avoiding the editorial policy and JMCJMS guidelines, and also unethical expectations from authors made me uncomfortable many times. But with a strong sense of determination and dedication, I never gave up and kept up with my responsibilities with honesty and full of humbleness.

A focus on Journal Quality Improvement

In order to publish a high-quality journal, which cannot be done alone, JMCJMS was

established with a strong dedication to time commitment, enthusiasm, and determination. No doubt, our team's dedication has taken JMCJMS to its current position. Enthusiasm, optimism, interest, interpersonal abilities, and persistence, however, are vital for progress. Each journal is the culmination of the combined efforts of the Editors, Editorial Board, reviewers, and authors. The most effective quality improvement is a collaborative effort. I always tried to involve our editors, mentors, and peers in editorial activities during these past years. JMCJMS has been running up to this point with a relatively small editorial team. It's my opinion that the time has come for JMCJMS to grow its team with fresh, energized members and more experienced reviewers and editors. Every member of the editorial team should be featured on the website with a brief biography, ORCID ID, and/or Scopus ID. As a result, information on the article's relevance to a particular field of medicine will be available to all aspiring authors who want to submit their work to the journal.

Online Journal Portal System represents a data source for scientometric analysis of journals, or the authors themselves [6]. Although JMCJMS is on NepJOL, it should have its own journal website. JMCJMS struggled to use the online journal management system effectively in previous years. I had a sense that authors had submitted their articles online, but our team and I were unable to properly follow and use the online journal administration system. I apologize personally for this. It needs to be addressed by offering our editors, reviewers, and authors seminars and training for the online journal management system. Journal is a valuable academic asset for the institution. I find it

disappointing that paper copies of JMCJMS are also no longer being printed. It's possible that it would only meet the requirements of many modern web journals today. Furthermore, print is a tried-and-true format that continues to fulfill promises that technology cannot yet provide, I feel that continuation of both print and online editions are important.

On the other hand, peer review, which I feel adds value and raises the quality of manuscripts, is an integral component of the scientific publishing process. However, the peer review is usually done by academics without pay. The quality of the journal is, first, the mirror of the expertise of the enthusiastic team members. To attract good editors and reliable reviewers, extra consideration is required. Special attention should be given to Journal's applications to global indexing and citation databases which we are lacking can be another important attraction for authors.

What will be next?

JMCJMS was first published biannually. From, 2022 JMCJMS started publishing the first issue of the year January-April Issue (No. 1), which will be released by March/April of every year, the second issue of the May-August Issue (No. 2), which will be released by July-August of every year, and the third issue of the September-December Issue (No. 3) which will be released by December of every year [1]. The Editorial team of JMCJMS is planning to bring four issues per year very soon. The journal's articles are indexed in a number of abstracting and indexing databases, and scientists hold them in high respect. To boost the journal's scientific influence and visibility, we are working to

incorporate it into different scientific databases. In the near future, the editorial team and editor-in-chief want to switch to Web of Science for indexing and Review mentorship training. Since 2013, JMCJMS has been offered for publication without any type of charge. With the decision of the editorial board, it is required to arrange a go-ahead with minimum charges for publication in the near future in order to pay for the costs related to editorial activities, administrative support, technical tasks, and indexing services. In addition, I'm interested in starting a social media team to explore JMCJMS worldwide through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media platforms. Further, I would like to invite contributions and anyone willing to expand their experience and take part in editing the Journal is highly encouraged to contact us.

Conclusion

I am proud to have been part of such an energetic, exciting, and I hope, building and maintaining the reputation and credibility of JMCJMS has been often one of the foremost priorities of the editorial team. There is no doubt, that JMCJMS will continue to improve the quality of the published papers in the future through the contribution of potential authors, quality selection of reviewers and Editorial team members, supportive editing of articles, and clearly defining instructions and ethical standards of the journal. Looking back over the past 10 years, on behalf of our editorial team I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the community of readers, authors, editors, and volunteers who have contributed to making JMCJMS what it is today.

It was not a one-man show, but a team of like-minded people. I am especially thankful to more than 50 unique individuals other than editorial team members who have volunteered their time and insights as peer reviewers throughout the journal's progress. I am deeply indebted to the department of Research and Publication, management of Janaki Medical College and Think Tank Foundation, Nepal for their continued support over the past ten years. I am thankful to the entire editorial team of JMCJMS, and especially to Prof. Dr. P. Ravi Shankar, a dedicated member of the scientific community, for providing the journal and me with the best advice possible wherever I needed. It would be a true injustice if I miss thanking Prof. Dr. Rano Mal Piryani and Prof. Dr. Mrigendra Amatya for their continual help with the Journal's development. Finally, Prof. Kshitiz Upadhayay Dhungel, Editor-in-chief has my eternal gratitude for his belief and unwavering trust in me to carry out the challenging but rewarding role of managing editor. His strong determination, dedication, decision-making capability, consistent support, and encouragement have been the driving force behind all of my efforts in the successful completion of a ten-year journey of JMCJMS.

At this moment, I find myself fortunate and feel emotional with Janaki Medical College Journal of Medical Sciences, because I started as a journal editor here and worked for JMCJMS consistently from its budding stage which gave me the platform to associate myself with different national and international journals. Being a part of the team of intellectuals participating in the global scientific research community has been an incredible learning experience. In the

Nepalese context, working as an editor is challenging. The work is hard, but the personal rewards are high. It is usually an honorary, voluntary work with no financial benefits. If you do not believe me, please ask any one of the veteran editors who have given their time and expertise freely to the scientific research community for many years. However, in the end, I am still in the learning phase, and many more remain to be learned.

Congratulations to JMCJMS on the successful completion of a decade!

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