

Stepping Towards a New Horizon

Scientific journals serve not only as gate keepers but also as gateways for the dissemination of quality of research, playing an essential role in the transfer of knowledge among practitioners.¹ It is our great pleasure and enthusiasm in publishing the first issue of 'Journal of Enam Medical College' which is the official journal of Enam Medical College. On behalf of the Editorial Board I would like to extend my sincere wishes and gratitude to all the contributing authors and reviewers.

The task of laying the foundation for a new scientific medical journal was not easy. The challenge was tremendous, and the resources were limited; but with the cooperation and enthusiasm of many colleagues, it became possible to publish the first issue of the journal in January 2011. The journal of Enam Medical College is a peer-reviewed, biannual, multidisciplinary journal with scope of publishing review articles, editorials, original articles, case reports and letters to the editors that meet the standards of the journal and the journals peer-review system. The ICMJE's "Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals" (URM)² provides guidance for the authors on manuscript preparation and on ethical issues related to publishing, for example authorship, conflict of interest, and internationally accepted ethical principles for research on humans and animals. To make the journal well visible and familiar among the researchers, academicians and students of Bangladesh, it would have an online version in addition to printed versions. And it would be possible to submit the article online in near future. We aim to circulate the journal widely throughout the country and we will offer complementary copies to all medical colleges and libraries. The scope of the Journal of Enam Medical College is relatively broad. It will act as a platform for publishing quality research works from all corners and all branches of medical sciences. All submissions are subject to peer review by the Editorial Board and by referees in appropriate specialties, to ensure the publication of good standard and relevant information to the practice of medicine in Bangladesh.

The overall health status in Bangladesh represents an unimpressive picture albeit some developments have taken place in this sector during the past decade. The country has adopted primary health care policy for achieving health for all, but policy achievement in the health sector is poor. Government delivery system is not efficient enough to cover the target population. The constitutional commitment of the Government of Bangladesh is to provide basic health and medical requirements to all people in the society.³ Since the mid 1980s the government has sought to improve the health care services and teaching institutions to fulfill the target.

The medical education of the country has been constantly improving to keep pace with the overall progress of Bangladesh. The doctor-patient ratio (1:4719)³ is still far away from being adequate in our country. To achieve the goal of 'health for all', private entrepreneurs are also coming forward establishing medical colleges along with the government. With this view Enam Medical College with its attached hospital started its journey at Savar in 2003, which is only 17 minutes drive from Gabtoli bus terminal. Since then the progress of this college is steady and sound. The college is affiliated to University of Dhaka and recognized by Bangladesh Medical & Dental Council (BMDC). So far 8 (eight) batches of students have been inducted. The students of the first two batches have already become doctors and the students of first batch have completed their internship training. The admission is based on merit keeping in conformity with Government order. It aims to provide education with scientific excellence, professionalism and social responsibility. The graduates of this institute shall set high standards of leadership in provision of healthcare, education, research and development of effective and equitable health services in partnership with the government healthcare delivery system.

As a private medical college our institute has to fulfill all the criteria and guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, BMDC and University of Dhaka. The number and capacity of medical education and research institutes are gradually increasing over last decades, but the

venues for publication are limited. Hence the inauguration of this journal is a timely step to open a gateway through which our young researchers will be able to publish their scholarly discourse, share their experiences with others, and disseminate knowledge and practices. And thereby they will play a significant role in defining local health needs and health policy making.

About 40 medical journals are published from different places of Bangladesh. Among these 33 are published from Dhaka city alone. Most journals are, however, published irregularly. The number of circulation of these journals varies from 200 to 500 copies. A committee formed by the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) considers the quality of the medical journals and gives temporary recognition to a journal after the first issue is published. Only a few journals are included in the Index Medicus or Excerpta Medica.⁴

Local medical journals are platforms for dissemination of information in order to generate new knowledge, which by itself might translate into practice and policy. Researchers for local areas with specific health problems, which are not known away from the area, need to have a forum supporting well-presented findings.⁵⁻⁷

Only a few journals in the developing world have a long history of survival. Barrier to the survival lists a number of hurdles e.g. lack of funding, irregular publication schedules, weak peer-review mechanisms that lack credibility, and poor local and international visibility.⁵ Researchers of the developing country attempt to publish their findings, even those related to the local problems, in more visible and acknowledged journals. In consequence the result of these researches become inaccessible to the researchers, clinicians and health policy makers of the native country, as access to the internet is limited in developing country and subscription fees of the established journals of developed countries are high.⁵ The problem is compounded by the fact that many policy makers are not aware of what is published in local journals and majority of local journals are not readily visible to the international scientific community.⁸ For solving this problem either well-known databases should change their policy to let local medical journals to become indexed and/or a more comprehensive scientific

database should be designed and supported by the whole scientific community.^{9,10} Although we are dealing with more regional and national problems, certainly we might provide lessons for health care professionals all over the world, especially within the South-East Asia which is environmentally, politically and culturally similar.

For survival of the Journal of Enam Medical College in the age of information, its messages should have an access to the international scientific community at least through its abstract. For our existence, articles that we publish should be indexed by our national databases, should be properly visible and acknowledged. Therefore, we have to try to be indexed in some international databases e.g. Index Copernicus (<http://www.indexcopernicus.com/>), Open J Gate (<http://www.openj-gate.com/Search/QuickSearch.aspx>) and Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>). We should develop an online peer-review system and find out a proper scientific publisher like Medknow Publications which is both, affordable and efficient, and ideally suitable for the needs of evolving biomedical journals of the developing world. Each medical journal ought to be supported by a research centre or a medical university. This support is valuable and limited budgets are important problems for editors. The problem is to be solved by finding out proper resources.

The publication of the Journal of Enam Medical College means that an important objective of Enam Medical College has been achieved. It will provide a forum for communication of scientific information within the country and as well as to the outside world. The editorial board is committed to the development of this journal to a major scientific periodical in the field of medical science. This goal will be achieved primarily through the support of our colleagues, readers and contributors. Its progress will be determined by the quality of its contributions in the field of research and education. We are confident that your support and the guidance of the Journal of Enam Medical College will lead to the evolution of this journal into a major publication in Bangladesh and abroad.

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