

Summary report on the

Second Regional Conference on Medical Journals in the Eastern Mediterranean

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

10–12 October 2004



World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

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World Health Organization
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Cairo
2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Second Regional Conference on Medical Journals in the Eastern Mediterranean Region was held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 10-12th October, 2004. It was organized by the Saudi Medical Journal (SMJ), the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO) and King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST); in collaboration with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). The conference was held at the premises of the Armed Forces Hospital and included a pre-conference course on Research in the Region: Current Status and a Window to the Future and a 2 day conference on medical journalism including a 4-hour workshop on statistics in clinical research. The objectives of the conference were:

- Outline the importance and current status of research in the region and the importance of statistics for medical editors.
- Review the current status of medical journals in the region and outline guidelines for a successful journal, and requirements needed to be an editor or peer reviewer.
- Outline the current status of medical ethics and scientific misconduct and its importance for publications in the region, and the importance of evidence-based medicine in designing and evaluating published material.
- Highlight the importance of journal indexing, and impact of e-health journalism.

The conference sessions covered topics on medical journals in the Region, editorship, peer review and publications, e-journalism and indexing, medical ethics and evaluation of published manuscripts (evidence-based medicine). Keynote presentations were given on the role of journal editors in promoting good scientific writing, the rights and responsibilities of medical journal editors, peer review, e-journalism and its impact on availability and accessibility to health and biomedical information, medical ethics and scientific misconduct, how journals should deal with reports of harm and also a special lecture on how to run a successful journal. There were 48 oral presentations on a wide range of subjects relevant to medical journals in the region and 10 poster presentations. One hundred and fifty-five participants from 11 countries of the Region attended the conference. Representatives of WHO Headquarters, Geneva (Ramesh Shademani), the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) (Bruce Squires and Farrokh Habibzadeh) and the Forum for African Medical Editors (FAME) (James Tumwine) were also present in support of the conference. Eminent faculties from outside the region were invited, and included Bruce Squires (Canada), Robert Daroff (United States) and Andrew Herxheimer (United Kingdom). In addition, there were also attendees from Turkey and India. Participants included editors and staff of medical journals in the region, as well as other interested participants from institutions in the Region. Editors and Editorial Board members from local journals included Saudi Journal of Gastroenterology, Saudi Journal of Ophthalmology, Saudi Pharmaceutical Journal, Saudi Journal of Kidney Diseases and Transplantation, Saudi Dental Journal, Health and Nutrition Magazine, Annals of Saudi Medicine, Pan Arab Journal of Neurosurgery, and Neurosciences.

2. EMAME TASKFORCE REPORT

The First Regional Conference held in Cairo, October 2003 resulted in a Taskforce to establish the Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors (EMAME). Since then there has been extensive communication and exchange of ideas between the Taskforce members.

A Taskforce business meeting was held during the 2nd Regional Conference, on Sunday 10th October 2004 at 8 p.m. and during the meeting Najeeb Al-Shorbaji from WHO EMRO, Bruce Squires and Farrokh Habibzadeh from WAME, James Tumwine from FAME and Andrew Herxheimer from the Cochrane Collaboration presented their experience and guidance for the future of EMAME. Basim Yaqub, Co-ordinator of the Taskforce presented the draft Constitution and the following decisions were taken:

1. Finalizing the essence of the constitution which was approved unanimously. This will shortly be available to all members, and it will appear in the Conference Supplement and EMAME website.
2. EMAME will be a part of a network of WHO EMRO, with all the support and collaboration available.
3. As the job of the Taskforce is finished, it was agreed that the existing Taskforce will act as interim Executive Council until the next conference with the following objectives:
4. Increase and widen the number of members. It was approved that all editors attending the first or second meeting will be the founding members of the Association; however, the Executive Council will strive to increase the membership as much as possible.
5. Explore the issue of education and training through courses and workshops held in different countries of the region in collaboration with WHO EMRO, and the possibility of developing a regional course.
6. Establish a website for EMAME and continue the current listserve and encourage further discussion through the listserve.
7. Continue the existing objectives of the Association.
8. Maintain collaboration between EMAME and other similar associations, especially WAME and FAME.
9. Plan for a meeting of the General Assembly of EMAME at the next regional conference, and election of the Executive Council.

It was also decided to nominate Shiraz, Islamic Republic of Iran for the next meeting within the next 2 years, and Farhad Handjani will finalize the exact dates and venue. Bahrain and Pakistan also offered to host future conferences.

The interim Executive Council members and responsibilities will be as follows:

President:	Basim Yaqub, Saudi Arabia
Vice-President:	Ahmed Jamal, Bahrain
General Secretary	Farhad Handjani, Islamic Republic of Iran
/Treasurer:	
Members:	Ahmed El-Morsy, Egypt Yusif Kordofani, Sudan Maqbool Jafary, Pakistan Jane Nicholson, WHO EMRO
Administrative Secretary:	Susan Douglas, Saudi Arabia

Najeeb Al-Shorbaji and Farrokh Habibzadeh will be advisers to the interim Executive Council, and Bruce Squires accepted the invitation to be an honorary member of the Association.

The report of the Taskforce was presented by Basim Yaqub to the Conference members (General Assembly) and was endorsed. So, the official birth of the Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors was announced.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Najeeb Al-Shorbaji presented acknowledgment and recommendations, which were endorsed by the General Assembly.

Acknowledgment

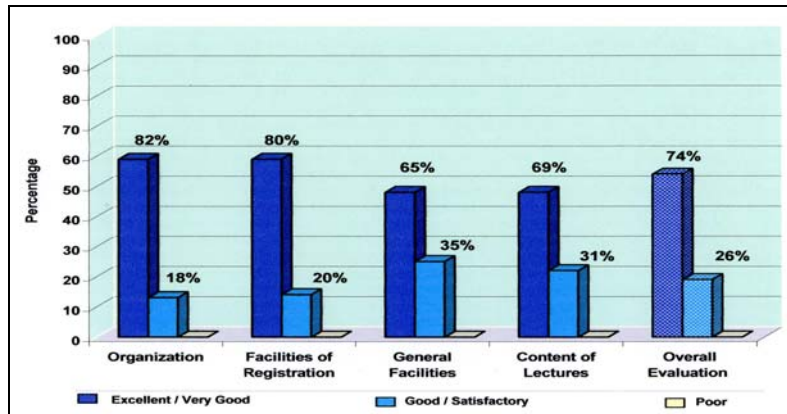
1. The conference congratulates Saudi Medical Journal and the Journal Patron HRH Prince Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz, Second Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector General on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary. The participants thank HRH Prince Khalid Bin Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz, Assistant to the Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector General, Saudi Arabia, the Patron of the Conference for his support and General Saleh Bin Ali Al-Mohaya, Chief of Staff Command for Opening the Conference. They also acknowledge the leadership and staff of the Medical Services Department, Riyadh Armed Forces Hospital and Saudi Medical Journal for their hospitality and excellent organization of the Conference.
2. The participants would like to thank the World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office and its Regional Director, Dr. Hussein Gezairy, for initiating, co-organizing and supporting the conference.

3. The participants also thank King Abdul-Aziz City for Science and Technology, and its President, Saleh Al-Athel, for co-organizing and supporting the conference.
4. The participants also thank the Islamic Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its President, Abdul-Aziz Al-Twajri for their support of the conference.

Recommendations

1. The conference gave its support to the establishment of EMAME and recommended that all editors of biomedical journals in the Region should support the interim Executive Council of EMAME to implement its objectives.
2. EMAME and WHO EMRO should maintain and strengthen their collaboration in support of the cause of biomedical journals in the Region and develop regional educational and training courses.
3. EMAME should develop a regional code of publishing ethics including plagiarism and scientific misconduct.
4. EMAME should develop a mechanism to enhance the exchange and dissemination of knowledge and information.
5. EMAME should establish committees and subcommittees on medical ethics, basic and clinical research, editorship, education and training and others.
6. All biomedical journals in the Region should explore all possibilities for communication, collaboration and exchange of expert opinion among themselves.
7. All biomedical journals in the Region should continue and enhance the exchange of the regional journals among publishers and libraries.
8. All biomedical journals in the Region are encouraged to publish an electronic version of their journal free of charge on the internet and collaborate with WHO EMRO in maintaining the regional electronic medical journals portal.
9. All biomedical journals in the Region should support and make efforts to seek sponsorship for attending the next regional conference on biomedical journals in Shiraz, Islamic Republic of Iran, to be held within the next 2 years.
10. All biomedical journals in the Region are encouraged to publish the Executive Summary report of the 2nd Regional Conference.

4. EVALUATION AND SUGGESTIONS



The evaluation of the conference by the attendees is shown in the figure.

There were a few suggestions and comments from the attendees which will be endorsed to Farhad Handjani to take into consideration at the next meeting. These included:

1. Workshops should be “hands-on,” interactive and should cover more than one topic. Possibly to be held over 2 days, one before and one after the conference.
2. Topics suggested for future workshops are peer review practices, handling the review process, standardization of editorial practice, publishing ethics, running a successful journal, copy editing and publishing technology. The topics discussed in the workshop should not be repeated in the conference.
3. In addition to the workshop and the conference, a full day course on research methodology may be advantageous for both researchers and editors.
4. The usefulness of having secondary medical publications in the region was suggested as a topic for a future conference.
5. Availability of computer and communication facilities for the attendees at the conference site.
6. Extend sponsorship to more editors in the region to benefit from such a conference through different means.

In conclusion, the conference was successful as it fulfilled most of its objectives and marked the birth of EMAME.

Annex 1

PROGRAMME**Sunday, 10 October 2004**

	<i>Session 1</i>	
	Chairperson: Prof. Mohamed Al-Mugairen	
8:00–8:05	Course Introduction	Basim Yaqub, SMJ
8:05–8:30	Introduction to Research	Dirk Deleu, Qatar
8:30–8:55	Importance of research in developing countries	Farrokh Habibzadeh, Iran
8:55–9:20	Current status of research in our region	Walid Maani, Jordan
9:20–9:45	Status of Saudi pharmaceutical publications: Present and future	Othman Al-Shabanah, KACST
9:45–10:10	Core skills of effective medical writing including research projects	Diaa Rizk, UAE
10:30–12:30	<i>Session 2</i>	
	Chairpersons: Prof. Walid Maani, D. Siraj Zakzouk	
10:30–11:00	KACST's Experience: A quarter century of funding scientific research	Abdulrahman Al-Abdul Aali, KSA
11:00–11:30	How to write an acceptable research project and manuscript	Bruce Squires, Canada
11:30–12:00	Cochrane and other systemic reviews and meta-analysis	Andrew Herxheimer, UK
13:00–14:00	Opening ceremony	
14:00–14:30	<i>Plenary lecture</i>	
	Randomized control study versus observational study: indications and methodology	Andrew Herxheimer, UK
14:30–19:00	<i>Statistics workshop</i>	
	Descriptive Statistics	Dirk Deleu, Qatar
	Inferential Statistics I	Tajammal Mustafa, KSA
	Inferential Statistics II	Nazeer Khan, KSA
	Selection and interpretation of appropriate Statistical methods	Abdul Jamil Choudhry, KSA

Monday, 11 October 2004

08:00–10:15	<i>Session 1: Medical journals in our Region</i>	
	Chairpersons: Ali Hajeer, Ahmed Jamal	
8:00–8:20	Biomedical publication outputs in our region (1988-2003)	Ghazi Tadmouri, UAE
8:20–8:35	The challenges of medical publishing in Africa (from zero to Medline)	James Tumwine, FAME
8:35–8:50	Prospect of medical publishing in Arabic	Bassel Atallah, Lebanon
8:50–9:05	Establishing an Arabic-language medical journal; the experience of Medical Arabization Magazine	Ehab Abdelrahim M. Ali, Kuwait
9:05–9:20	Developments in medical journalism in Pakistan after the WHO Regional Conference, Cairo, 2003	Shaukat Ali Jawaid, Pakistan
9:20–9:35	Evaluation of medical research quality in Iranian biomedical journals	Arash Etemadi, Iran
9:35–9:50	Medical journals in Sudan	Mahdi Shamad, Sudan
9:50–10:05	Palestinian biomedical journals, an absolute necessity	Haitham Idriss, Palestine

10:30–12:00	<i>Session 2: Editorship</i> Chairpersons: Hassan Bella, Farhad Handjani	
10:30–11:00	Role of journal editors in promoting good scientific writing	Robert Daroff, USA
11:00–11:30	The rights and responsibilities of medical journal editors	Bruce Squires, Canada
11:30–11:45	Open discussion on editorship	
11:45–12:00	Remote editing and publishing of medical research in the EMR	Sajjeev Antony, Oman
13:00–15:45	<i>Session 3: Peer review and publications</i> Chairpersons: Hazzaa Al-Hazzaa, Ibrahim Mofleh	
13:00–13:30	Peer Review	Bruce Squires, Canada
13:30–13:45	Peer review among young doctors	Ahmed El-Hassan, KSA
13:45–14:00	Open discussion on peer review and publications	
14:00–14:15	Web-based manuscript submission and peer review: the experience of the Annals of Saudi Medicine	John Cathey, KSA
14:15–14:30	Absence of evidence vs. evidence of absence	Farrokh Habibzadeh, Iran
14:30–14:45	Medical journalism and the informed consent process: where do we stand	Farhad Handjani, Iran
14:45–15:00	Difficulties and problems facing the Saudi journal of ophthalmology	Ali Al-Rajhi, KSA
15:00–15:15	Importance of statistics in scientific writing	Fikri Abu-Zidan, UAE
15:15–15:30	Open discussion on peer review and publications	
16:00–17:00	<i>Session 4: E-Journalism and Indexing</i> Chairpersons: George Roberts, Maqbool Jafary	
16:00–6:30	E-Journalism and its impact on availability of and accessibility to health and biomedical information	Najeeb Al-Shorbaji, WHO EMRO
16:30–16:45	Open discussion on E-journalism and indexing	
16:45–17:00	Does the number of authors per article affect indexing of biomedical journals	Mina Roshanipoor, Islamic Republic of Iran

Tuesday, 12 October 2004

08:00–10:45	<i>Session 5: Medical Ethics</i> Chairpersons: Mohamed Sofi, Najeeb Al-Shorbaji	
8:00–8:30	Medical ethics and scientific misconduct	Robert Daroff, USA
8:30–9:00	How should medical journals deal with reports of harm	Andrew Herxheimer, UK
9:00–9:20	National procedures for following up the ethics of biomedical scientific research	Abdulaziz Al-Suwailem, KACST, presenter Faisal Abu-Duheir, KACST
9:20–9:35	Survey of ethical issues related to publication in biomedical journals in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region	Ahmed Abdou, Presenter, Jane Nicholson, Co-author, EMRO
9:35–9:50	The role and the need of national bioethics board	Maqbool Jafary, Pakistan
9:50–10:05	Countering plagiarism in the net age	Ahmed Badar, Pakistan
10:05–10:20	Islamic ethic guidelines in genomics research: A public health initiative	Aida Al-Aqeel, KSA
10:20–10:35	Role of ombudsman in medical journals	Kanikaram Satyanarayana, India
10.35–10.50	WHO bulletin quality control	Ramesh Shademani, WHO HQ
11:15–12:00	Special lecture: How to run a successful journal	Basim A. Yaqub, SMJ

13:00–15:00	<i>Session 6: Evaluation of published manuscripts (Evidence-based medicine)</i> Chairpersons: Ali Al-Rajhi, Maher Al-Hadidi	
13:00–13:30	Evidence based medicine–critical appraisal of therapy articles	Abdullah Alkhenizan, KSA
13:30–13:45	EBM publication: the role of the peer reviewer	Mahmoud Elbarbary, KSA
13:45–14:00	Authorship for scientific papers	Dirk Deleu, Qatar, Presenter Hassan Al-Hail, Qatar
14:00–14:15	To request and publish authors' specific contributions to papers: What we believe, what we act	Mahboobeh Yadollahie, Islamic Republic of Iran
14:15–14:30	Reviewing the literature	Hassan Bella, KSA
14:30–14:45	Dermatological publications in the Gulf cooperation council and KSA	Khalid Al-Aboud, KSA
14:45–15:00	Collaboration among regional publications	Shuja Tahir, Pakistan
15:00–15:15	Neuroanatomy: An interdisciplinary journal	Mustafa Aldur, Hamdi Celik, Turkey
15:30–15:45	Poster summaries	Bruce Squires, Canada
15:45–16:45	<i>Session 7: Future of EMAME: conclusions</i> WAME perspective Ethics and misconduct Taskforce report Conference report	Bruce Squires/Farrokh Habibzadeh (WAME) Andrew Herxheimer (Cochrane/EASE), Basim Yaqub (EMAME) Najeeb Al-Shorbaji, (WHO EMRO)

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