Disentangling the Complexity of Research Publications in Pharmacy

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1) Motives and benefits of publishing research findings

2) Malaysian publication statistics

3) Key strategies in getting research published
Introduction

• Implementing change to pharmacy practice in recent decades has required a solid base of research and evidence to support the clinical and economic value of extended roles for pharmacists.

• The essence of research is to define a problem, gather data systematically, interpret the data, and report results.

• The impact of a research work output can only make sense to stakeholders in healthcare if it has been disseminated effectively.
Figure 1. Time line of the five stages of major change in pharmacy practice.

Nation, RL. How is the research score card for hospital pharmacy. *J Pharm Pract Res* 2006;36(2):90-91

“In relation to pharmacists undertaking research, we have come a long way—but we still have a long way to go. It is crucial that pharmacists contribute to generation of new knowledge through their involvement in research. Any profession that is not actively involved in research is destined to become a dead profession.”

**The valley of ghosts**

While other Asian tigers are roaring ahead in biotechnology, Malaysia's BioValley is going nowhere fast. **David Cyranoski** asks what went wrong.

“For most Malaysian researchers, publications in international peer reviewed journals do not seem to be a priority. People here do not seem to publish much, apart from in workshop and conference proceedings”
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http://www.scimagojr.com/
Research Around The World: Fast Statistics

Country Rankings

Subject Area: Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics
Region: All
Order By: Documents
Display countries with at least: 0 Documents
Year: 1996-2012

Subject Area: Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Citable Documents</th>
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<th>Self-Citations</th>
<th>Citations per Document</th>
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## Country Rankings

**Subject Area:** Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics  
**Region:** Asiatic Region  
**Period:** 1996-2012

### Ranking Parameters

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## Table 1. Summary of the 37 Journals Included in the Analysis of Original Clinical Research Publication by Pharmacist Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>2002 Impact Factor</th>
<th>1993 No. of Research Articles</th>
<th>1993 No. (%) of Pharmacist Authors</th>
<th>2003 No. of Research Articles</th>
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<td>New England Journal of Medicine</td>
<td>31.70</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>6 (2.4)</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>8 (3.5)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Journal of the American Medical Association</td>
<td>16.59</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>4 (1.7)</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>17 (6.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Annals of Internal Medicine</td>
<td>11.40</td>
<td>181</td>
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<td>Circulation</td>
<td>10.26</td>
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<td>3 (0.5)</td>
<td>911</td>
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<td>Archives of Internal Medicine</td>
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<td>20 (8.6)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>American Journal of Psychiatry</td>
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<td>265</td>
<td>2 (0.8)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology</td>
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<td>436</td>
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<td>3 (1.9)</td>
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<td>3 (5.9)</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>3 (1.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Journal of Pediatrics</td>
<td>3.22</td>
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<td>13 (6.2)</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>12 (3.6)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Journal of the American Geriatrics Society</td>
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<td>152</td>
<td>9 (3.9)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Clinical Therapeutics</td>
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<td>17 (19.3%)</td>
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<td>18 (15.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Chest</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mayo Clinic Proceedings</td>
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<td>4 (0.8)</td>
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<td>American Journal of Clinical Pathology</td>
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<td>American Heart Journal</td>
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<td>3 (0.9)</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>7 (2.5)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Journal of General Internal Medicine</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>103</td>
<td>2 (1.9)</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>American Journal of Preventive Medicine</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Journal of Pain and Symptom Management</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6 (4.6)</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>American Journal of Cardiology</td>
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<td>622</td>
<td>9 (1.4)</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Annals of Emergency Medicine</td>
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<td>Journal of Family Practice</td>
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<td>1 (16.7%)</td>
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<td>Hematology-Oncology Clinics of North America</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1 (2.2)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
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</table>

**Totals**: 8127 191 (2.4%) 8793 271 (3.1%)


501 abstracts presented at the 1994 ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting were evaluated; 55 (11%) of these had been published.

215 abstracts presented at the 1994 ACCP Annual Meeting were evaluated; 71 (33%) of these had been published.

The publication rates for abstracts presented at ASHP and ACCP meetings were found to be low.

The failure to publish the results of the studies may limit the ability of a reader to judge the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the research.

• The study aimed to determine the publication rates of abstracts presented at two pharmaceutical conferences in Malaysia.

• All abstracts in the abstract books of the 2001 Pharmacy Scientific Conference (PSC) and the 16th Malaysian Society of Physiology and Pharmacology Scientific Meeting 2001 (MSPP) were evaluated for publication.

• The publication rate for both MSPP and PSC was 34.6%.

• Two factors were significant in predicting publications: authors affiliated with USM and a multicentre study.

• Mean time from presentation to publication was 2.5 years.

Joy Of Publication

Why publish?

- Communicate with relevant people
- To get international invitations
- To enhance career options
- Be known in a particular area of interest
- Immortalize your name in the scientific arena
- Joyful & self satisfactory
• Science is a **shared knowledge** based on a common understanding of some aspect of the physical or social world.

• The objective of research is to **extend human knowledge** beyond what is already known.

• Research results are not of any use until they are **published!!!**

• If your research does not generate papers, it might just as well not have been done.

“**If it wasn’t published, it wasn’t done”**
Motives To Write Papers

- Pleasure of challenge in scientific writing.
- Develops quality thinking.
- Opportunity to share information or discovery with the whole world.
- Driving force to contribute to scientific knowledge.
- Improvements in patient care.
- Benefits humankind.
- Enhance the ability to view problems from different perspectives.

“There are three necessary steps in useful research: first to begin it, second to end it and the third to publish it.”

*Michael Faraday 1791 – 1867*
Basic Competency Needed To Be A Pharmacy Researcher

- Identifies relevant problems, generates hypotheses, conducts research experiments to test hypotheses and interprets the results of research studies.

- Demonstrates clinical competence in a specialty area of pharmacy practice that complements the research focus.

- Applies legal and ethical principles and regulatory requirements when conducting clinical and experimental research.

- Communications research and clinical findings to relevant stakeholders.
1. Knowledge of basic writing skills.

2. Ability to understand research objectives and methodology thoroughly.

3. Ability to use scientific databases (E.g. PubMed, Scopus, etc.)

4. Speed reading of journal articles and ability to criticize them as well as understand the statistics.

5. Ability to evaluate journal strength and research novelty.

6. Correct choice of the target journal where to send your manuscript.

7. Continuous motivation to follow-up during the review process and ability to have wide frustration index (40-70 % rejection rate in general).
Common Types of Publication

1- Scholarly journal articles
2- Books and chapters in edited books
3- Conference publication (abstracts and full papers)
5. Letter or case notification
6- Report to funder & patents
7- Lay press
8- Multimedia and online publications
• Good title is the passport for readers to start reading the abstract.
• Extensive and concise abstract is an opportunity for the reader to go through the full article.
• Careful not to write long redundant introduction.
• Should satisfy reader with enough details so that he/she can repeat your work accurately.
• Careful not to confuse readers with many numbers and too many non sensible tables.
• Your golden space to amaze the reader with your capability of critical thinking.
Challenges In Writing

Overall coherence & focus
Logical flow of information between and within sectors
Matching tables and graphs with text
Links between paragraphs
Headings
Links between sentences
Jargons
Abstract words
Grammar
Spelling
Capitalization
Page layout
Punctuation

More complex tasks

Least complex tasks
Publication usually represents the culmination of most research efforts.

The process of selecting the appropriate journal has become increasingly complex due to the proliferation of journals, areas of specialization, and the emergence of interdisciplinary topics.

Increasing pressure on researchers and academic clinicians to publish high volumes of work in highly visible publication outlets means that authors must have a finely tuned, efficient process for submission.

A Key Decision However, Every Author Must Make Is Where To Submit Their Paper?
Research Journals: How Many Do We Have?

- Web of Knowledge is an academic citation indexing and search service, which is provided by Thomson Reuters.

- The combined databases includes the following:
  - 23,000 journals.
  - 23,000,000 patents.
  - 110,000 conference proceedings.
  - 9,000 websites.
  - Coverage from the year 1900 to present.
  - Over 40 million source items.
PubMed currently holds over 5669 journal titles with a cumulative number of 3 million articles. These articles are only a tiny fraction of the total literature – since a lot of the rest is locked up behind publishers pay walls.

PubMed, an index of biomedical abstracts published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information receives one paper per minute (on average).

This does not include published articles in Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry, Engineering and Computer Science and Humanities.
Next in line is Scopus, updated daily, Scopus includes:

- 21,912 titles from more than 5,000 international publishers.
- 20,874 peer-reviewed journals (including 2,800 open access journals).
- 367 trade publications.
- 30,000 books and growing.
- 5.5 million conference papers.
Selecting the right journal is not easy.

Authors have to optimize between many criteria or constraints before reaching a decision about where to publish.

Choosing the Target Journal: Do Authors Need a Comprehensive Approach?

Armen Yuri Gasparyan
Departments of Rheumatology and Research and Development, Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust (A Teaching Trust of the University of Birmingham, UK), Russells Hall Hospital, West Midlands, UK.

Choosing the right journal for submission of a manuscript is a tough task for most authors. Experts in writing and editing advise selecting the journal at the start of manuscript writing, so that the article can be addressed to the audience of the chosen journal and presented in a general style and length preferred by that journal, thereby helping to avoid unnecessary rejections and delays with publication of the research data and opinion pieces that may advance science. For authors from mainstream science countries, the choice is often determined by the institutional policies, regulations of research funding agencies and knowledge of journal rankings. In fact, scholarly publications are now valued as a hard currency for academic promotion and for enhancing the position of the leading academic and research institutions in prestigious world rankings.

The emerging scientific powers are also increasingly concerned with what and where their scientists publish, trying to incentivise publications in high-impact journals. However, not all good works find their home in these journals, posing a dilemma – which of the lower rank journals would be suitable for submission?

Over the past few years the global publications boom and uncontrolled growth in the number of journals offering rapid publication and different models of open access have created (7%) and publication fees (6%) appeared to be the least important factors.

Other than this opinion poll, a few surveys have analysed authors’ preferences for the most suitable journals, with evidence being produced primarily for biomedicine. In 1992, the general medical faculty of Stanford University (n = 305) were asked to rank factors affecting their submission choices. The results distinguished the journal’s prestige, readership, relevance of the published topics, acceptance rate, print circulation, manuscript turnaround time, the editors’ and reviewers’ characteristics as the main determinants of initial submissions. For subsequent submission after a rejection, however, the acceptance rate was ranked as the most important factor. Unsurprisingly, other recent surveys have indicated that the current active authors consider the journal impact factor as the crucial player in the field, and that no alternative impact indicator has yet gained a comparable rank.

The ‘obsession’ with high-impact journals is a phenomenon of the ‘big science’ era, and it reflects the authors’ wish to publish their best papers in widely visible and well cited media. As a consequence of the impact factor game, it has become a common practice to initially target journals with high impact factors and, in case of rejections, embark on the lower rank journals.
Consult peers; check online listings, professional associations

Journal recognition factor (impact) and citation record

Scope of journal, types of articles, target audience, editorial policies

Journal requirements, accessibility and reach of article

Peer review process, rejection rates

Time and cost of publication, future viability in case of new journals

Select journal: optimize quality, reach urgency and acceptance probability

Adopted from: http://www.enago.com/blog/how-to-select-the-right-journal-for-publication/
Publication Ethics

Publish and perish – if you break ethics rules

• So always avoid:
  • Plagiarism (must learn how to ethically paraphrase sentences).
  • Gift authorship.
  • Multiple and duplicate submissions.
  • Non-disclosure of conflict of interest.
  • Submission without the consent of co-authors.
  • Fraud by data manipulation, data exclusion, suppression of inconvenient facts.
  • False academic credentials.
  • Improper use of subjects and animals in research.
  • Too many self-citations.
  • Copyright infringement*.

*Copyright belongs to publisher, therefore, always seek for permission to use any part of their article!
What Reviewers Look At?

- Is the manuscript important?
- Is the “So what?” question answered?
- Are there any ethical problems with the conduct of the trial?
- Are statements adequately supported, either by the data or by references to the existing literature?
- Are the conclusions adequately supported by the data?
- Are the conclusions believable?
- Does the paper make extensive use of jargon or introduce unnecessary abbreviations?
- Is the presentation of the manuscript consistent with the journal style?

The following problems appear much too frequently:
- Submission of papers which are clearly out of scope
- Failure to format the paper according to the ‘Guide for Authors’
- Inappropriate (or no) suggested reviewers
- Inadequate response to reviewers
- Inadequate standard of English
- Resubmission of rejected manuscripts without revision
1. Poor experimental design.
2. Failure to conform to the targeted journal.
3. Poor English grammar, style, and syntax.
4. Insufficient problem statement.
5. Methods not described in detail.
6. Over interpretation of results.
7. Inappropriate or incomplete statistics.
8. Unsatisfactory or confusing presentation of data.
9. Conclusions not supported by data.
10. Incomplete, or outdated review of the literature.

1 in 10 studies does not explain analyzed variables
1 in 9 studies does not describe statistical analysis
1 in 2 does not report units of measurements
Less problems with a statistician as co-author
We lead

Key Points To Remember

- Publishing is a process not a goal
- It is about good communication
- It is both exciting and fun

YOUR PAPER IS CLEAR AND WELL RESEARCHED, BUT I'M AFRAID IMAGINARY ANIMALS ARE OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF OUR JOURNAL.
Your Response to Rejection/Revision

• Understand why it is rejected.

• Try to understand what went wrong.

• Make your new version different.

• Show you are responsive to the issues raised.

• Keep the main ideas uncluttered.
What Gets A Manuscript Accepted?

ACCEPTANCE

- Attention to details
- Check and double check your work
- Consider the reviews
- English must be good as possible
- Presentation is important
- Take your time with revision
- Acknowledge those who have helped you
- New, original and previously unpublished
- Critically evaluate your own manuscript
- Ethical rules must be obeyed

“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler”

Albert Einstein
Your Article Is Accepted!

Reactions to acceptance of an article

Student
Party time!!!!

Post-doc
Horray!!!

Assistant Prof.
Yeah!!

Associate Prof.
Yes!

Professor
OK.

Prof. after retirement
Who cares
The joy of writing a paper

Why am I doing this?

Tell us, did you enjoy writing your first scientific paper? Or, if you are an enthusiastic newcomer to science, are you looking forward to it? Science is writing. You have probably spent weeks on writing your protocol. Furthermore, it may have taken days to put your standard operating procedures, clinical record forms and analysis plan on paper. Eventually, you may have reserved the next few months to write up your paper. How can one enjoy writing a paper, meant to be read by unknown colleagues somewhere else on the globe? Who are your customers? They could be clinicians, trying to keep up to date, or biomedical scientists searching for the best work in their field of interest.

What is the best approach to writing a manuscript on a biomedical scientific study? Well, the most solid approach, obviously, is to read a textbook on scientific writing. Both of us have Mimi Zeiger on our shelves [1]. But did we actually read the book? We may say we followed a more modern medical concept: an “evidence-based” approach using two simple facts: a) our papers that have been rejected for publication have had this

What do I need to consider in advance?

Several issues need to be taken into account after deciding to write a paper. The best summary is given by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) [2]. The first principle is the paper should present novel data. Duplicate publication of data is a suicidal booby trap and must be avoided at all times [3].

Consider the following:

The data
• Are these novel or confirmative?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the data?

The journal
• Is my paper suitable for a specialty journal or a general medical journal?
• Am I heading for a high impact factor journal [4]?
• Is this kind of paper well cited [5]?
• Do I need a fast acceptance?
• Does my institution or granting body require that my paper have open access?

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Students' attitude toward use of over the counter medicines during exams in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Almalak, Haya; Albloui, Ala'a Ibrahim; Alkhelb, Dalal Ahmed; et al.</td>
<td>SAUDI PHARMACEUTICAL JOURNAL</td>
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<td>Assessing quality of a worksite health promotion programme from participants' views: findings from a qualitative study in Malaysia</td>
<td>Liu, Siow-Yen; Hassali, Mohamed-Azmi A.; Shafie, Asrul A.; et al</td>
<td>HEALTH EXPECTATIONS</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Psychometric properties of the Malay version of the Osteoporosis Health Belief Scale (OHBS-M) among Type 2 diabetic patients</td>
<td>Abdulameer, Shaymaa A.; Syed Sulaiman, Syed A.; Hassali, Mohamed A.; et al</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RHEUMATIC DISEASES</td>
<td>17</td>
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1. Adaptation and validation of a questionnaire assessing patient satisfaction with pharmacy services in general hospitals
   Al-Jumah KA, Hassali MA, Al-Zaagi I.
   Related citations

2. Students' attitude toward use of over the counter medicines during exams in Saudi Arabia
   Almalak H, Abdlouwi AI, Alkhelb DA, Alsaleh HM, Khan TM, Hassali MA, Aljadhey H.
   Related citations

3. A qualitative study exploring public perceptions on the role of community pharmacists in Dubai
   Rayes IK, Hassali MA, Abduelkarem AR.
   Related citations

4. Community Pharmacists' Attitudes, Perceptions, and Barriers Toward Adverse Drug Reaction
   Elkalmi RM, Hassali MA, Ibrahim MI, Jamshed SQ, Al-Lela OQ.
   PMID: 24618640 [PubMed - as supplied by publisher]
   Related citations
Patterns and Predictors of Non-Prescription Medicine Use among Malaysian Pharmacy Patrons: A National Cross Sectional Study

Mohamed Azmi Hassali1, ABDUL HANIFF MOHAMAD YAHAYA1, ASRUL AKMAL SHAFIE1, FAHAD SALEEM1,2,3, GIN NIE CHUA1, HISHAM ALIJDHEY3

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Example Of Published Research Articles
Personal Journey In Relation To Pharmacy Practice Research

- Editorial Board Member
  - American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education (AJPE)
  - Pharmacy Practice
  - Journal of Pharmaceutical Health Service Research
  - Journal of Pharmaceutical Policy and Practice
  - Archives of Pharmacy Practice
  - Journal of Pharmacy and Alternative Medicine

- Invited Reviewer
  - BMJ Open
  - Plos Medicine
  - International Journal of Pharmacy Practice
  - Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy
  - International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy
  - Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics
  - BMC Health Service Research
  - Health Policy
  - Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety
  - Value in Health
  - Journal of Public Health
  - Drug Safety
  - Annals of Pharmacotherapy
Dear Dr. Aymi Mohamed Hassali,

We write to thank you for the exceptionally fine quality of your peer reviewing for Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety of manuscripts submitted during 2013. The strength of our journal, like all peer-reviewed journals, depends in large measure on our reviewers’ abilities and efforts. As editors, we weigh your comments carefully.

While a superb review is the product of both expertise and commitment, it is also a remarkably anonymous accomplishment. All the editors and the author of a paper appreciate the help a good critique provides, but under the present peer review system the author rarely knows the identity of the reviewer, and deans, departmental chairs, division chiefs, and tenure and promotion committees are often totally unaware of the amount and quality of this important academic work. We would like to offer you the opportunity to change this.

Not all reviews and reviewers are of the same high quality. We grade each review, and we know our best reviewers. You are one of them. The quality and timeliness of your review for Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety placed the work you did for us among the best of all reviews in 2013. We thank you, and wish to inspire you to sustain your high standards. Further, because we are interested in giving more credit to reviewers like you who provide exceptional service to medical science in this important role, I would encourage you to send a copy of this letter to others who should be aware of it, and to note on your curriculum vitae (CV) the honor conveyed by it.

Again, many thanks for your fine help. Not only have the editors and authors benefited, but so have the journal’s readers and, ultimately, medical science.

Sincerely,

Brian L. Strom
Editor-in-Chief

Joerg Hasford
Regional Editor for Europe

Sean Hennessey
Regional Editor for the Americas

Byung Joo Park
Regional Editor for Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Oceania
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