

### Third Regional Conference on Medical Journals in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Shiraz, Islamic Republic of Iran - 27 -29 January 2006

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Following the first conference in Cairo (2003) and the second conference in Riyadh (2004), the third regional conference was held in Shiraz, Iran on 27-29 January 2006.

The conference was organized by Shiraz University of Medical sciences and WHO/EMRO in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors (EMAME).

Around 200 participants including journal editors, health professionals, and researchers have attended the conference.

The objectives of the conference were:

1. Raise awareness of editors of regional medical journals of key issues relating to development and quality of medical journals in the Region and to develop skills in that regard;
2. Review the medical journals in the Region and discuss ways to take regional journals forward, including finalizing a voluntary code of publishing ethics for regional medical journals;
3. Promote collaboration and networking among editors of regional medical journals, and the role of the Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors (EMAME) in this regard;
4. Review the trends of medical journals publishing based on bibliometric studies of subjects, authorship, geographic distribution, etc.
5. Review status of electronic publishing and open access of medical journals in the Region.

Four parallel workshops were held on the first day of the conference. Topics were focused on

editorship, peer-review, e-journalism and evidence based medicine.

The various sessions of the conference covered the following topics: research and medical journalism in the Region; editorship; biomedical e-journalism; regional biomedical journalism; peer review; indexing and evaluation systems; ethics in biomedical journalism; and evidence-based medicine. About 40 oral presentations were delivered in addition to 10 poster presentations.

Panel sessions were held on how to improve editorship skills; how to establish regional journals; how to improve the peer review process in the Region; and collaboration between EMAME, the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), and the Forum for African Medical Editors (FAME).

The conference concluded by suggesting the following recommendations:

1. EMAME with support of WHO/EMRO to pursue the feasibility of establishing a regional peer reviewed online journal.
2. WHO/EMRO to look into possibility of establishing a repository for article titles submitted to medical journals in the region, for use by editors in order to reduce the problem of duplicate submission.
3. EMAME members are encouraged to be reviewers where feasible and a database of potential reviewers (membership voluntary) established on the EMAME website for all journals to access.
4. WHO/EMRO to pursue inclusion of SCI data in abstracts included in the IMEMR.

5. EMAME to pursue enhanced collaboration with WAME and FAME.
6. WHO/EMRO to strengthen the IMEMR to cover all journals in the Region and include abstracts of articles.

At the end of the conference, the first EMAME General Assembly was held. It endorsed the Executive Council for 2006-2007, as follows:

<b>President:</b>	Basim Yaqub, Saudi Arabia
<b>President Elect:</b>	Ahmed Jamal, Bahrain
<b>Past President:</b>	(vacant)
<b>Secretary General/Treasurer:</b>	Farhad Handjani, Iran
<b>Vice-Presidents:</b>	Maqbool Jafary, Pakistan Jane Nicholson, WHO/EMRO Ahmed EL-Morsy, Egypt
<b>Vice- President-at-large:</b>	Mahdi Shamad, Sudan Muayad Khalid, Qatar Walid Maani, Jordan Shaukat Jawaaid, Pakistan

The Sudanese Journal of Public Health has participated in the conference. Its editor Dr. Elsheikh Badr has delivered a presentation on e-journalism and chaired one of the conference sessions. Copies of the SJPH were exhibited during the conference and distributed to some of the participants.

The Assembly agreed to hold the fourth regional conference in Bahrain in 2008 and the fifth regional conference in Pakistan in 2010.

Conference presentations can be retrieved from the following website:

<http://www.emro.who.int/emame/EMMJ3/programme.htm>.