

Medical Journals in Sudan: a new hope?!

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When we first thought of introducing the Sudanese Journal of Public Health (SJPH) prompted by the first regional meeting on medical journals held in Cairo 2003, we were also much concerned by the inappropriate situation of medical journalism in Sudan.

The history of research and medical publishing is deeply rooted in our country dating back to the Sudan's notes and records produced at the outset of the 20th century ⁽¹⁾. Following that, the active research and publishing movement has resulted into appearance of several prestigious publications. The Sudan Medical Journal inaugurated in 1953 was a prominent milestone in this movement which has yielded later over 25 medical and health related publications ⁽²⁾. These journals, published by academic, professional and service institutions were regarded as a rich platform for dissemination of knowledge and communication of research findings.

However, during the last two decades the medical journalism movement in Sudan started to witness a decline culminating in irregularities and disappearing of many good journals. Even the Sudan Medical Journal, the voice of the Sudan Medical Association and the prime journal in the country was affected by that syndrome and still complaining of unacceptable irregularities.

The Sudanese Journal of Public Health (SJPH) was thus conceived in this atmosphere; and although strongly meant to boost public health profession in the country, it was also introduced in response to the weak situation of medical publishing in Sudan. When finally the SJPH was introduced in the wake of 2006, there was no regular peer-reviewed

medical journals in the country with the exception of the Sudanese Journal of Dermatology.

Nowadays, we are extremely happy that a revival of medical journalism in Sudan is strongly emerging. In a recent workshop organized by the SJPH in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and WHO/EMRO, nine active medical journals have participated ⁽³⁾. These journals, backed by academic and professional institutions in the public and private sectors and representing different medical specialties, signal a new phase in availability of venues for research dissemination in the spirit of academic and professional development as well as health care improvement in the country and the region. The workshop itself, being the first of its kind in the country, is another milestone in the movement to assuring quality and sustainability of medical journals in Sudan. During that workshop, a suggestion came out to establish a Sudanese association of medical editors to link and gather together editors and people interested in medical publishing. We call for the inception of this association which is highly needed to develop and support knowledge and skills of medical editors in the country. The association could also be used as a reservoir for sharing resources (both technical and administrative) between different journals and could play an instrumental role in building the capacity of health professionals in the aspects of research methods, medical writing and publication strategies. All these roles could ultimately lead to improved quality and sustainability of these journals.

Finally, we think that close collaboration of medical journals in Sudan will result into maintaining a

venue to reflect the huge scientific production of the diversified talented human resources for health in this country.

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