

ΑΡΘΡΑ ΣΥΝΤΑΞΗΣ EDITORIALS

..... **Rendering small Journals viable and attractive**

A common problem for small medical Journals, particularly those written in a national language other than English, is that they lack original submissions of high standards, and thus they have little or no important impact on the medicine and health issues. A vicious circle seems to be holding captive the Editors of these journals, as the authors seem to prefer bigger Journals to submit their original work and the Editors strive to fill their pages with Editorials and comprehensive reviews, making their Journals look even more unattractive to the authors. Are there really practical and feasible ways for the Editors to surpass this circle and make their small Journals viable and look attractive?

The Editors of the small medical Journals should first analyze the attributes of the already established as big Journals. First, most of them have a versatile Editorial board and international advisory board, who all contribute to the same purpose, i.e., the improvement in the competitiveness of medical publishing. The Editorial board has to be independent of any financial support received by the pharmaceutical industry or the Scientific Society it represents. Instead, it is not unusual for small Journals to be run exclusively by the Chief Editor(s) with the rest of the Editorial board being merely names on a paper, not being clear if it is due to the Chief Editor's unwillingness to share responsibilities or it is the Editorial board's lack of interest in contributing to the Journal's improvement. Whatever the reasons for publishing these extra names in the Editorial board, they certainly do not seem to be an important asset.

Another property of the big medical Journals is that they have a sufficient budget to buy valuable commentaries from famous authorities. Chief Editors should not only be supposed to be renowned scientists but good managers as well, and a key component in failed executive strategies is to cut marketing expenditures or, in other words, cut "spending money to make money". Therefore, small Journals

should not be afraid to risk some money to gain a profit in the long run. Commentaries by highly acclaimed authors will be one of the key elements to attract high-level submissions, and a good reason for the Journal to be included in medical databases.

Inclusion in international indexing catalogues is a good incentive to attract fair submissions. PubMed is undoubtedly the ultimate dream of any Editor of a small Journal, as the authors seem to prefer submitting their original work according to this criterion. However, there are far more databases that can be relatively easier for a small Journal to be accepted, such as Current Contents/Clinical Medicine, SCI Expanded, ISI Alerting System, ISI Journal Master List, Index Medicus/MEDLINE, EMBASE/Excerpta Medica, Chemical Abstracts/CAS, and Index Copernicus. For Greek-language Journals Iatrotek database is a good alternative.

Increasing the attractiveness of a small medical Journal also means maintaining an active, rapidly updated, user friendly and informative website. Guidelines on the management of various conditions should be contained in it, and a public forum might be a good incentive to start a fruitful conversation and cooperation among scientists. The website needs to be run by professionals, and again spending some money needs not to be avoided. In return, a high number of visitors will attract sponsorship of the website by pharmaceutical companies, recuperating the costs spent.

Rapid interval from acceptance until publication is important for most authors. Quarterly Journals, as we used to know them, belong to the past. The Editors of small Journals should bear this in mind and even if they do not have sufficient submissions to cover 6 Journal issues per year, they could alternatively proceed with publishing the corrected proofs of the already accepted articles in their official websites. This is a policy that is gaining field in the bigger Journals, and can be easily adopted by smaller ones as well at no extra cost.

Adhering to the well-known strategy of the marketing industry, namely advertisement, letters or e-mails inviting submissions of original work in the Journal could be sent.

Moreover, a letter of appreciation should be sent to all corresponding authors who decide to submit their work to the Journal, even in cases when regrettably announcing a rejection, encouraging the authors to consider submitting their future work to the Journal. In the end of every year, the Editors might consider awarding a prize for the best original article published which does not necessarily have to be money, but could be a certificate or a free subscription for the following year.

Summarizing, it is important for the Editors of small medical Journals to create their own ways of attracting submissions of original articles and making their Journals viable. Exchanging ideas with other Editors of small Journals on how to achieve this goal is important, and a relevant online forum needs to be created for sharing experience and information.

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