

Celebrating the Achievements and Fulfilling the Mission of the Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors

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Global and regional editorial associations are gradually evolving to meet the growing challenges of the current stage of digitization. Publishing journals and distributing related information is becoming easier with the development of digital technologies and globalization of most fields of science. The ever-growing opportunities for scholarly publishing, however, require concerted actions of regulating organizations. Journal editors are now encountering numerous professional and ethical problems which can be resolved with the support and guidance of editorial associations.

Several updated recommendations and didactic sources are currently available from the most prestigious global editorial associations, such as the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), and Council of Science Editors (CSE) (1). Their recommendations cover a range of issues – from ethical authorship and peer review to unethical citations and retractions. Such recommendations help editors upgrade their journal instructions and meet indexing criteria of bibliographic databases (2). The adherence to the global recommendations and enforcement of the instructions for authors distinguishes legitimate sources from unethical, or ‘predatory’, ones, which are threats to the established publishing practices.

What comes to our attention is that many ethical issues are arising in non-Anglophone countries despite membership of journal editors from these countries in the global editorial associations and their immense financial and professional contributions to the activities of these associations. Presumably, more efforts and investments in local and regional associations of journal editors can be helpful for curbing the growing ethical problems. In line with this, several associations have been launched across Eurasia over the past few years, with some of them having overlapping geographic interests and spheres of influence (i.e., the Asian Pacific Association of Medical Editors [APAME], the Asian Council of Science Editors [ACSE] based in Dubai, and the Council of Asian Science Editors [CASE] - in Seoul).

The emerging networks of journal editors and publishers can take the lead in regulating the growing and diversifying publishing landscape by supporting the most promising periodicals and improving ethical standards across Eurasia. Lessons can be learned from the most successful established associations. There is a good example of nurturing local journals by the Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors (KAMJE), which has gained its reputation because of highly appreciated achievements of the past 20 years. The KAMJE was launched in February 1996 to improve the quality of Korean medical journals (3). Initially, the number of member-journals was 51, which has grown to 255 by December 2015. Most of the journals are tracked by three national databases of the KAMJE: KoreaMed, KoreaMed Synapse, and Korean Medical Citation Index. Titles of some Korean journals point to their ambitious aims to serve interests of specific disciplines and contribute to the global science (e.g., *Cancer Research and Treatment*, *Blood Research*, *Annals of Laboratory Medicine*, *Perspectives in Nursing Science*). The absolute majority of the KAMJE journals opted for Open Access (OA), and 98 got archived by PubMed Central. The Association has increased visibility of its member-journals and individual authors, who publish in these journals, by fully digitizing contents, joining CrossRef and assigning Digital Object Identifiers (DOI), and endorsing the Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) initiative. Each journal’s website, integrated with Korean and global databases and initiatives, is now easy to navigate through, with excellent functionality and attractiveness for readers and authors worldwide. Searches of separate items are also simplified by properly tagging them by the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms. Not surprisingly, the impact of most member-journals has increased citation-wise over the past two decades, resulting in better representation of Korean periodicals in PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. The *Journal of Korean Medical Science* (JKMS), the flagship source of the KAMJE, for example, is now indexed by MEDLINE, Scopus, Science Citation Index, and Current Contents (Thomson Reuters). Two years ago,

the Journal opened an important Section on Editing, Writing & Publishing to cover issues in science editing, ethical publishing, and scientometrics and to improve the journal editors' science communication skills further.

Apparently, Korean medical journals have strengthened their positions and become self-sustainable because of the continuous support of the KAMJE. As of December 2015, 79 member-journals are indexed by Scopus, 34 – by Web of Science, and 6 – by the new bibliographic database of Thomson Reuters – Emerging Sources Citation Index. The achievements in publishing and indexing Korean medical journals over the past two decades are indeed impressive. However, there are still some unresolved issues. First and foremost, the KAMJE can take more active stance against 'predatory' editing, fake peer reviews, and dubious brokering services of sprung-up agencies in the region, and propose terms for regulating the relationships between authors, ethical editorial agencies, and journal editors. Transparency in the relationships is the first step toward more ethical publishing. Korean authors, who refer to the third parties for editing support, have to disclose any external contribution in the footnotes of their articles. They should also consult the principles of authorship and contributorship, which were presented in the ICMJE's updated recommendations (December 2015).

More efforts are required to expand indexing of Korean journals in PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus, and specialist bibliographic databases. Most specialized databases are now advancing their abstract-tracking and archiving services and revising the indexing criteria to cover outstanding sources. Recent updates in the recommendations of the global editorial associations and organizations supporting OA, copyrights, and research reporting standards should be analyzed and adapted for upgrading instructions for authors of Korean journals. Balanced approach is also advisable for encouraging searches through Korean databases and citing relevant national sources. Local journal articles are of prime interest to Korean authors, and responsible editors can ethically increase national citation rates by pro-

moting Korean databases as essential platforms for systematic syntheses of evidence. Responsible editors can also achieve more by improving their credentials and attending a variety of trainings, webinars, and conferences endorsed by the KAMJE. KAMJE is continuously encouraging its members to undertake editorial research and set development policies based on accumulating evidence. Most member-journals are published in print and online. Online and OA publications attract more contributors and translate into the current achievements of KAMJE.

XMLink, the subsidiary company of KAMJE, facilitates online publishing for most member-journals. In fact, *XMLink* has developed and upgraded KoreaMed, Synapse, and KoMCI. Given the growing importance of the digital networks and publishing platforms, KAMJE encourages its editors to prioritize and invest more in online publishing.

Finally, KAMJE continues to play a key role in the regional activities of the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Editors and contributes to its database. KAMJE may benefit a lot from expanding its cooperation with the most reputable global and regional editorial associations, helping to fulfill the Association's mission and achieve more (Box 1).

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Box 1. Vision and mission statements of the Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors (KAMJE)*

Vision

- Improve human life through the advancement of the medical sciences

Mission

- Create and provide innovative and sustainable platforms for editors and researchers through the quality editing and publishing

Core values

Interact, Innovate, Impact

- Interact with authors, editors, readers, publishers, and academic societies
- Innovate research and publishing practices
- Impact global science

Goals

- Guide editors and researchers
- Support quality journal publishing
- Provide authoritative and transparent information
- Enhance research and publication ethics
- Expand networking and cooperation

*Endorsed by the KAMJE as its brand identity and future plans on January 20, 2016.