



## Saudi Medical Journal of Students (SMJS)

Official Journal of Faculty of Medicine University of Tabuk

ISSN: 1658-8274 (Print version); 1658-8282 (Electronic version)

### WHY SHOULD A MEDICAL STUDENT BECOME AN EDITOR?

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To cite this article: Alaenzi YA, Raza MT. Why Should A Medical Student Become An Editor?. Saudi Med J Students. 2021;2(2): 2-4.

An editor of a peer-reviewed Scientific Journal is a challenging assignment. Manchikanti et al. [1] have identified the demanding responsibilities of an editor. In addition to the intimidating peer-reviewing process, editors need to familiarize themselves with manuscript processing and quality assurance. They must ensure that each manuscript is within the journal's scope and has followed the author guidelines to the letter. It falls within the responsibilities of the editors to seek and communicate with potential peer-reviewers with relevant specialization. At the end of the process, the editors take part in deciding whether or not to accept or reject a manuscript.

### Student Medical Journals and The Saudi Medical Journal for Students

Student Medical Journal (SMJ) is a concept that is gaining renewed interest in medical publications as undergraduate healthcare students must pursue research and publish their work. Publication at any conventional peer-reviewed journal for undergraduate students is taxing. The idea that a student has to compete with researchers having decades of experience and access to incomparable funds and resources needs to be addressed. Students should have a welcoming platform to publish their work. SMJs provide this platform by giving priority to students. Such journals cannot be compared with typical biomedical journals because SMJs need to struggle to maintain a delicate balance between being "Student-friendly" and "a reliable peer-reviewed journal."

The Saudi Medical Journal for Students (SMJS) is the official journal of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Tabuk, and part of the SMJS-MET publications [2], the other publication being MedEdu Tabuk (MET), a newsletter with over 50,000 subscribers. SMJS, the first SMJ in the Gulf

region, publishes biannually original (original research papers, review articles, and case reports) and non-original (feature/perspective articles, editorials, opinions, and reviews) contributions from health care students (Medicine, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Science, Biological Sciences). The journal was established in 2019 and is recognized by Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS) for student publications. The author MTR, a Faculty at the University of Tabuk, is the founding Editor-in-Chief of SMJS. The author YAA, an Editorial manager of administrative issues at SMJS-MET, is an intern at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Tabuk.

### **The Student Editors**

In most SMJs, the Editorial Board Members (EBMs) are students. At SMJS, undergraduate students from health care faculties across the Kingdom and Gulf region are eligible to become EBMs. The Editorial decisions of SMJS are with the student EBMs, who are involved in the publication process, starting from manuscript submission to the end when the manuscript is either rejected or published. Expert reviewers do peer review, and EBMs act as shadow reviewers. The EBMs work under the supervision of the Faculty Advisory Board (FAB). A University Advisory Board (UAB), constituting Deans of different health faculties of University of Tabuk, ensures the quality of SMJS. The Dean of Medicine is the Chairman of the UAB. The Editor-in-Chief, a faculty (MTR), heads the FAB and is a member of the UAB.

### **It is Not Easy to be an Editor**

To be an EBM at SMJS, students have to balance time between their demanding course and editorial responsibilities. They must compete with their peers and prove their suitability through hard work and skills. An EBM job is a highly specialized field that requires a high level of intellect and professionalism. Student editors must familiarize themselves with editorial roles and responsibilities and improve their language and writing skills. It requires a lot of learning and training.

### **An Editorial Board Member as a Rewarding Position**

It is a "dream come true" for an undergraduate student to become an editor of an SMJ because it provides prestige and respect among peers and faculty [3]. EBMs get firsthand experience in research, writing scientific publications, plagiarism, and ethical issues through their editorial work. Editors have to liaison professionally with fellow editors, students, faculty, reviewers, and the management. In addition, they have to maintain good work ethics and train new colleagues. EBMs develop the skill to complete tasks in a timely fashion and learn crisis management and cope with stress at the workplace. All these attributes make them confident and build leadership skills.

### **The Best Part is Helping Students**

A student EBM is aware of the hardship that every student face in publishing their research work. At SMJS, editors highly value the opportunity to help fellow students in this hardship. The

opportunity to help other students achieve their career goals is a priceless feeling and sufficient to keep one motivated.

In conclusion, the job of an EBM at an SMJ is highly satisfactory, and the work is more than often a motivation in its own right to go on working.

[The author (YAA) is an intern at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Tabuk, and has been an Editor at The Saudi Medical Journal for Students (SMJS) for more than two years.]

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