The year 2017 was both a challenging and rewarding year for Saudi Medical Journal (SMJ). Having marked its 38th anniversary, SMJ’s Impact Factor has risen to a high record of 0.709 with a total of 2,523 citations as reported by the InCites Journal Citation Reports Thomson Reuters (Figure 1). This achievement has validated the continuous efforts of the whole editorial team. Along with the rest of the editors, we would like to recognize and express our appreciation to our dear authors, reviewers, readers, editorial board members and staff for their input, hard work and support.

The journal started the implementation of CARE Case Report Guideline¹ as a mandatory requirement for case report submissions. Prior to submission, authors should read the CARE Checklist and write the article following the guideline’s essential requirements. This hopes to raise the clinical value of case reports published.

We are also conducting a regular critical auditing to the performance of the Journal. We are very meticulous with regards to the accuracy of the editing; medical writing is different from other professional writing, an excellent scientific experiments with novel ideas may still be rejected due to poor writing. Most authors in this region have difficulty in incorporating the objective, methods and knowledge in a proper English language.

The editors observed that poor language quality is one of the factors that delays the peer review process. Occasionally, reviewers were unable to assess the paper due to poor writing. Language should not be a barrier in scientific publication especially for non-native English speakers. Subsequently, articles with language deficiencies also take significant time in the editing stage and delay the publication process. To overcome this, we strongly suggest that prior to submission, authors should have their articles edited for correct use of grammar, syntax, flow and clarity and submit only once the language has been improved. As a pre-submission requirement, strict compliance shall be observed.

The discoverability and accessibility of scientific content to various relevant platforms is very important in today’s digital age. We take this time to announce the indexing of Saudi Medical Journal in Cengage. Cengage Company is a global leader with thousands of partner libraries around the world and has a large digital archive of research databases, reference books, eBooks and more. With the recent inclusion in this database, we anticipate enhanced visibility and accessibility of our articles.

The journal faced a few challenges this year. The frequent website issues also add more to the
We are particularly happy to welcome back our biostatistician, Dr. Adel Mishriky. His experience and expertise will be beneficial to the journal.

We have surpassed many changes and challenges in 2017, yet we remain focused on our goals and priorities. As the new year commences, we will continue to deliver the brand of excellence we have established for many years. We will remain keen to sustain our position in the region as a respected journal for scholarly publishing.

Again, we would like to thank everyone who supported us through the years.

References

1. CARE. Case reports guidelines. [Updated 2018; Accessed 2017 November 14]. Available from URL: http://www.care-statement.org/

Table 1 - Origin of “peer-reviewed” articles published in the Saudi Medical Journal for the year 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>(55.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf countries</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>(55.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries/Eastern Mediterranean Region</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>(22.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(6.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(12.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(10.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual statistics. This year, we received 973 manuscripts from which we processed 402 articles that have complied with the journal requirements (Figure 2). Fifty-five percent of the papers we published were from Saudi Arabia (Table 1). Our total rejection rate was 85% of which 58% were rejected at initial review by the editors.

There are reasons that large number of SMJ’s rejected articles are Case Reports. First, some of them do not qualify to be published because they do not meet the proper criteria. Case Reports are published when they have novel ideas, unique observations, unusual association of disease, and a new side effect of medication or a unique therapeutic approach. The second reason for rejection is merely due to the large volume of submission, which gives the Case Reports a chance to be published in another journal.

The average processing time frame of original articles in the year 2017 from received date to acceptance was 2.5 months, from acceptance to publication 2.9 months, and from received to publication 5.4 months.

We are pleased to announce the following new additions to the Editorial Team: Dr. Ali SM Jawad and Abdulghani Al Saed. We are honored to have them and we look forward to working with them in the coming year. Also, we bid farewell to the 3 long-time members of the board Dr. Mohamed Bakheit, Shireen Qureshi, and Mohamed Tariq. We are very grateful for their outstanding commitment and invaluable contribution and wish them success in all of their future endeavors.

We are particularly happy to welcome back our biostatistician, Dr. Adel Mishriky. His experience and expertise will be beneficial to the journal.

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Fahdah Alokaily, MD

Editor-in-Chief

SMJ 2017 ... Alokaily

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Fahdah Alokaily, MD

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Our thanks goes to the reviewers who have participated in the excellent review of manuscripts and books for the year 2017.

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Verity Chester
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Victor Kong
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