

Heralding Change: The Evolution of the IJO in 2019

The new editorial team took over the journal from January to February 2019 issue. As the team prepared to take over their roles under the new leadership in late 2018, it was time for introspection. Dr. Dhammi's editorial term had led the journal into a position of prominence among orthopedic journals worldwide, continuing on the stellar work done by editors before him. We had to sit down and decide how we could do better. The *Indian Journal of Orthopaedics* (IJO) has achieved indexing on all major indices including PubMed, but MedLine indexing remains pending. A persistent grievance for our authors has been the long lead time from submission to publication. In addition, we lacked subspecialty focus, and our issues were frequently published late. There were many issues to be tackled, but the first step was to structure an editorial board and reduce article processing time. The editorial board was restructured, and new members were invited on board from across the world and the country; we sought the help of our existing editorial board, friends, and colleagues. We created a new editorial board with all orthopedic subspecialties, technology, and health-care policy subsections, each headed by an editorial board member. Once the restructuring of the editorial board was done, we set about setting right the deficiencies in the article processing cycle. We held numerous meetings with our publisher Wolters Kluwer/Medknow and brainstormed internally to pick up the points of delay. The article cycle was reorganized to give more responsibility to team members with the editor-in-chief and the associate editors keeping an overall control and quality check. The article time from submission to publication has since decreased from submission to the first acceptance from 197.84 days in 2018 to 64.39 days at the time of writing this editorial. The article time from the first acceptance to publication has also fallen from 68.65 days in 2018 to 52.67 days. Editorial decision time has fallen radically from 27.77 days to 4.83 days. This is a reflection of the efficiencies of processes we are trying to bring in and the excellent co-operation we are getting from our team of the editorial board and our reviewers who have risen up to the challenge. The IJO now releases its issues a month ahead of the due date as a result of this workflow.

The IJO now publishes articles ahead of print on its home page. This measure was brought in to reduce the lead time for authors to see their papers published and to enable their academic needs. The articles are uploaded once ready for publication in the Ahead-Of-Print tab and assigned a DOI. The articles move into the issue and are updated when published in a given issue. This has been a major improvement in the journal workflow.

We have already received 552 articles for the year 2019, and we are ready with our issues for November–December

and January–February 2020 as well as March 2020. There has been an upsurge of quality submissions to the journal, and we are on our toes keeping up with the rising tide. The January–February 2020 issue is a special issue with the Foot and Ankle Society of India, and we are thankful for their inputs. We invite other specialty associations also to partner with us in our journey to excellence and as a voice of Indian orthopedics in the years to come. The March 2020 issue will herald a focus on technology and innovations in orthopedics. As newer technologies become available, the IJO would like to focus on them and be a forum for discussion and presentation of evidence on usage and adoption of these technologies.

We have kept up our efforts of Medline indexing as a sustainable goal and are putting in extensive efforts to conform to guidelines on reporting and publishing to attain this objective. The current obstacles are minor, and we expect to be in line for the next submission for indexing to follow up on the submission last made a couple of years ago. We have addressed all the concerns that were made, and we are preparing our pitch for this final indexing goal.

Wolters Kluwer/Medknow has been a partner as a publisher with the IJO for many years now and has been a facilitator for the growth of the journal to its current form and shape. As we grow and expand our reader and subscriber base, we felt the need to explore newer options. With much deliberation and after a series of meetings and discussions with different publishing houses, in the presence of the editor-in-chief of the IJO and senior management of the Indian Orthopaedic Association (IOA), the IJO will now be published by the very eminent publishing group Springer Nature from the issue of January 2020. This is an ambitious and important step in the growth of the journal, and we are excited about the new possibilities generated by this emerging partnership. We are extremely thankful to Medknow for their services and convey our appreciation to the team who has worked alongside many of our senior editors in managing the IJO over the years.

The change from a predominantly print model to a preferred online model of journal delivery has brought down our print copies significantly impacting our revenue. This green initiative has however opened other lines of revenue which will be explored with Springer Nature with the goal of the journal becoming financially independent and also profitable without losing sight of quality. We shall continue printing copies at a cost for our subscribers who desire it.

Earlier this year, Dr. Anil Jain wrote of an audit of the performance of the IJO over the past 12 years. He reported the impact factor of the IJO for the year 2017 as



The SICOT-SORC-Indian Journal of Orthopaedics team at a scientific writing workshop in Mumbai



The ISKAA-Indian Journal of Orthopaedics team at a scientific writing workshop in New Delhi

0.98 which had been a significant improvement over the previous years.¹ The impact factor for the next year for the IJO has been made available to us by our publisher Wolters Kluwer/Medknow. Impact Factor® as reported in the 2018 Journal Citation Reports® (Clarivate Analytics, 2019) is 0.978.² We are still strong, but we would wait for these years of transition to see the impact factor stabilize and improve. Our readers, reviewers, publisher, and editorial board and the ever-supportive members and the governing body of the IOA continue to support us in this endeavor.

In a novel initiative, the IJO has sought to partner with like-minded organizations and societies in the country to educate and further the cause of scientific research and publication across India. The first of these scientific writing workshops was held in February 2019 in association with the *Journal of Clinical Orthopedics and Trauma* in

New Delhi. This was followed by another one at Delhi in March at the ISKAA summit, in May at Baroda, in July at Cuttack, and in September in association with SICOT India at Mumbai. The forthcoming workshops are at Kolkata with the West Bengal Orthopaedic Association in September, in October with ROSA at Jaipur, and in November at the IOA conference in Kolkata. The highlight of these workshops is that they are all attended by the editor-in-chief and one or two of the board members. They are organized by local editorial board members in association with local/state organizations, and they all have a structured format with a strong local faculty presence. We have received excellent reviews on these workshops, and we hope to keep up the momentum.

The coming year we are starting work on a project dear to our hearts and spearheaded by this editorial team. The IJO



The Indian Journal of Orthopaedics-JCOT-DOA team at a scientific writing workshop in New Delhi

would like to play a central role under the guidance of IOA to set up guidelines for clinical practice in orthopaedics. We welcome all who are interested in the same to please join hands with us to make this achievable. This is hard work, and we need all national specialty organizations with us on this journey.

This year has been a sea of change, acceleration, and new directions for the IJO. The future looks bright, and it looks busy for us at the IJO working group. We look forward to engaging with you all, our readers and our reviewers and our editorial board members and of course our colleagues and peers in the IJO at the scientific workshops and at the national conference of the IOA in November at Kolkata. We have an excellent program planned for you, and we invite you to be part of the same.

A very special thanks to the reviewers of the IJO, without whom the journal cannot function, and without the efforts of whom, the quality and efficiency of the journal will falter. We will shortly be instituting certification for our reviewers which they can download directly from the site in appreciation of their efforts. We are also in planning for an association to Publons to enable our reviewers in their academic advancements and improve their review work.

That's our summary for this year. We shall reach out to you half-yearly from now on with an update on your journal, the IJO. We request you to make the primary platform for your research and publications and work with us to take the IJO to its next level of success.

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