THE QUEST FOR INDEXING A JOURNAL

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Abstract
Hearing about the selection of one’s journal by a reputable indexing system pleases every editor. Journals with an international editorial members selected from prolific researchers have a higher chance of being selected by a prestigious indexing system. Geographic distribution of authors’ affiliations is another important factor. Considering a minimum of internationally acceptable editorial standards would also influence the decision of the indexing systems to select a journal—publishing few quality articles is much better than publishing a bunch of poorly designed badly reported ones. The key to success is having a group of dedicated staff with good communication skills.

Keywords: Periodicals as topic, Journalism, Bibliographies as topic, Ethics, Publishing, Medicine

Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (The IJOEM), the journal I founded in 2010 in Iran (Fig. 1) [1], and they worked. The journal was selected for indexing in MEDLINE, Scopus, EMBASE, and many other indexing systems within the first three years of its activity [2]. All of them accepted to back-index all the journal contents from its very first issue published in January 2010, a success achieved by only a few journals in the region. The journal had also a high visibility; its website received one hit every 5 seconds. Herein, I am going to describe how we did it.

In the very first days, I contacted many erudite scholars in the field and could fortunately come to an agreement with some of them from various parts of the world to work with us as Editorial Board members. There were just a few Iranians on the Board. Each member was a prolific scientist in his research field and could potentially help us with collecting submissions from their universities or research centers. This in turn, helped us to fulfill the second important criterion for being accepted by a reputable indexing system—publishing articles from most parts of the world, not just a specific region or country.

In the first months, when the journal was not yet recognized by any scientific bodies, the number of submissions was not even enough to compile a single issue of the journal. We decided to publish narrative review articles solicited from researchers in the field. We usually contacted them in person and invited them to write the review. In return, we promised that their work will receive complete attention with a quality artwork design, graphs, language editing, etc. We published just a few original articles selected with high scrutiny based on their scientific merits and quality of methods used. Many authors were indeed unable to comply with the standards set. Often, we asked them to provide their raw data set so that we could help them with data analyses, and presentation of results. We also helped them with language editing to find their voice. And, all were provided for free. These pre-peer-review edits significantly increased the likelihood the manuscript surviving the peer review.

To compensate for the few original articles we published, which was against the rules set by the national committee of medical journals in Iran, we used to publish some fillers—the calendar of events, images in medicine, etc. Publishing just a few good articles gave us the opportunity to be more selective. On the other hand, concentrating on just a few articles enabled us to maintain the minimum levels of internationally acceptable editorial standards.

Another important factor is to set a standard set up for the journal. The journal page layout including its fonts, color themes, sections, journal website design, etc, should not vary from issue to issue. Large variance reflects instability of the publishing system. It is very important for an indexing system that the journal has smooth and stable publishing routines. And, perhaps, that is why one of the important factors taken into account by some of the indexing systems is on-time publication of a journal. A delay in publication would indicate ineffective management of the journal. In such a circumstance, the indexing systems would usually rather wait and watch the progress of the journal for a longer period.
I believe the sequence of applying for these indexing systems is also important. Some of these systems are in fact not indexing services [3]; they are repositories (e.g., PubMed Central) or information aggregators (e.g., EBSCO). You cannot reapply for most of the indexing systems for a certain period, say 2–4 years, if your application is rejected. Therefore, you should not apply unless you are almost sure that your journal meets the minimum required criteria. I would go first for EBSCO and PubMed Central. They are easier to get in. Then, I would go for EMBASE and databases of Clarivate Analytics (formerly known as the Institute for Scientific Information [ISI]). MEDLINE should be the last indexing system to try as it has the most stringent selection criteria among all the indexing systems, to the best of my knowledge [2].

All these cannot be possible without a good editorial team. Our achievements in The IJOEM could have not been possible without the painstaking efforts made by our two enthusiastic editors—Dr. Mahboobeh Yadollahie, the Deputy Editor, and Ms. Ashraf Simi, the Executive Editor of the journal (both founding members) [4]. I have taught them the basic concepts of journalism and editorship craft; thus, we could communicate effectively. Although all of us were part-time editors, I believe we did a great job [5]. And almost all were done by considering the above-mentioned strategy.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
None to declare

REFERENCES

ЖУРНАЛДЫ ИНДЕКСТЕУ ПРОЦЕСІ

Түйіндеме
Кездеде редактор журналдымыз беделді индексету жүйесі арқылы таңдалғаны жөнінде қуанады. Мұшелері ең беделі зерттеушілердің арасынан таңдалған, халықаралық редакторлық алқасы бар журналдардың беделі индексету жүйесіне ену мүмкіндігі жоғары. Тағы бір маңызды фактор - жарияланған авторлардың географиялық таралуы. Халықаралық редакторлық стандарттардың талаң етілетін мінімумуң ескеру - индексету жүйелерінің журналды таңдау үшін же есеп етіп тағы бір фактор: сапалы мақалалардың аз санын шығару ғана, жоғары жазылығы мақалалардың көп мәліметін шығарғаның ғары зәлдекі маңызынан жақсы. Табық жетудің кілті - коммуникативті дәлелді және өзіне қарсы тұрған құнды болуы.

Тұйін сөздер: тақырып ретінде мерзімді басылымдар, журналистика, библиография тақырып ретінде, этика, баспаіс, медицина


ПРОЦЕСС ИНДЕКСИРОВАНИЯ ЖУРНАЛА

Резюме
Каждому редактору приятно слышать, о том, что его журнал выбран авторитетной системой индексации. Журналы с международной редакционной коллегией, члены которой отобраны из наиболее авторитетных исследователей, имеют больше шансов попасть в престижную систему индексации. Еще одним важным фактором является географическое распределение публикующих авторов. Приятие во внимание необходимого минимума международных редакционных стандартов является еще одним фактором, влияющим на решение систем индексации о выборе журнала: публикация небольшого количества качественных статей намного лучше, чем публикация большого числа плохо оформленных и плохо проработанных статей. Ключом к успеху является наличие группы преданных своему делу сотрудников с развитыми коммуникативными навыками.

Ключевые слова: периодические издания как тема, журналистика, библиография как тема, этика, издательское дело, медицина