

Port Harcourt Medical Journal valedictory editorial

The *Port Harcourt Medical Journal (PMJ)* went to press inaugural in September 2006 following the decision of the College Academic Board chaired by Prof OJ Odia. That was volume 1, number 1. The College Academic Board approved a levy of N2,000 for all academics below the professorial cadre and N5,000 for the professorial cadre. The amount was deducted by consent from the bursary. By dint of determination and sense of duty, flyers calling for manuscripts were printed and distributed to virtually all tertiary health facilities countrywide. A desktop computer system was acquired and stationeries including letterheaded papers were procured. An International Standard Serial Number, 0795–3038, was obtained. The peer-review process was initiated. Many reviewers were drawn from the Academia in the College. Later, many other reviewers were recruited from within Nigeria and from outside. An advisory editorial board was drawn up from Nigeria and overseas. This Board was updated to include academics from Australia, India, USA and Ghana.

For several years, the Editorial Board managed the journal. Prof Chinyere Pedro-Egbe has been the Business Editor, while Dr PC Aziagba was in charge of circulation. We were able to circulate the journal on the web through the University website. Prof AOU Okpani has been the Deputy Editor-in-Chief. Pioneer Editorial Board members included Prof EB Dede of blessed memory, Prof AC Ojule, Prof AO Arigbede, Prof AE Ihekwa, Prof BC Didia and Prof CI Akani. It is gratifying that many of the founding editorial board members have become professors. The current editorial board members include Prof DV Dapper, Prof SA Uzoigwe and Dr P Fiebai.

Dr Richard Echem doubled up as Assistant Editor and Secretary of the Board. It is meet and proper that he is taking up the mantle of the Editor-in-Chief. I remain grateful for his dedication and expertise. I remain proud of the issues of the Journal meticulously edited with impressive reference lists imbued with consistency and accuracy.

Successive provosts after Professor OJ Odia, including Prof BC Didia, Prof CI Akani, Prof C Mato and the current Provost, Prof I Siminialayi, have showed commitment to sustain the journal by allowing the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board space. Prof Mato

encouraged us to continue when running the journal was getting stressful.

We applied for indexing with PUBMED (National Library of Medicine, USA) on two occasions. Alas, we were denied indexing. However, we are indexed with African Journals OnLine, African Index Medicus and Thompson Reuters Index Copernicus. The journal participated robustly with the Guild of Editors of Medical Journals of Nigeria. Unfortunately, the journal was not encouraged to play this role for lack of funding.

In quest for wider international exposure, we entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Medknow India (Wolters Kluwer) to publish and print the Journal. With this, manuscripts are now submitted and processed electronically. The cost for producing each copy of the journal became so much that we decided to stop the production of hard copies for which we were paying customs duties/fees to collect from the postal service.

Thankfully, lecturers of the College submitted robust manuscripts. Mention must be made of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health. That department has produced more professors than any other departments in the College to date. They have extended this achievement with presentation of Inaugural Lectures.

There has been a very prudent management of resources to run the journal from the once only contributions from about 95% of the lecturers. I still remember the 5% who did not contribute. We used to be patronised by pharmaceutical companies with advertisements. Generous individuals also made handsome donations at swearing-in ceremonies for graduating doctors and dentists. Some donations in pledges were not honoured.

The College should make conscious efforts to keep the journal afloat. There is a sharp competition for manuscripts from contributors. Lecturers should be encouraged to publish in the journal and the journal should also be rated high in the assessment process for promotion. Indexing in PUBMED will be a *sine qua non* to attract submissions as universities now demand the indexing status of journals in which publications submitted for appraisal for promotion

are made. The stated requirements have been met for many years. We urge Medknow to discharge their expectation from the MOU.

Funding for research is essential in the College. Tutorials, seminars and lectures on the preparation of manuscripts should be made available to staff of the College.

Finally, I am eternally grateful for the honour, privilege and support in holding the position of Editor-in-Chief of PMJ for 13 years running. I am retiring but not tiring. I will be honoured to assist the journal when there is the need. Long live the PMJ. Long live the College of Health Sciences. Long live the University of Port Harcourt. Peace be unto Nigeria.

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