



# To Which Journal Should You Submit Your Article?

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Medicine is a science of uncertainty and an art of probability  
William Osler, Canadian physician (1849–1919)

## 30.1 What Are the Various Types of Journals?

Medical journals help physicians to upgrade their knowledge. Beside education, they also contain news and views about the profession and provide a forum for doctors to debate other issues. Journals are an amalgamation of clinical medicine, basic science and popular journalism and can be divided into two major categories based on the content they publish:

- **General Medical**—These journals publish manuscripts on many different subjects in each volume and thus have a variety of articles. Examples of these are The New England Journal of Medicine, The Lancet, The BMJ and The National Medical Journal of India and Current Medicine of Research & Practice (CMRP).
- **Specialty**—These journals publish articles related to a single speciality only. Examples of these are the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Anaesthesia, Gastroenterology, Circulation and the British Journal of Surgery.

## 30.2 Which Are the Oldest Running Medical Journals?

The history of scientific journals goes back to 1665 when the Royal Society in England published the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. In the same year, the ‘Journal des Savants’ (Scholars) appeared in France [1].

Currently, the oldest running medical journals are ‘The New England Journal of Medicine’ which has been published continuously for over 200 years, ‘Lancet’ which is being published since 1823, The BMJ from 1840. In India, the ‘Indian Journal of Medical Research’ is being published since 1913 and is the oldest journal.

### **30.3 How Frequently Are Journals Published?**

A journal can be published annually (Journal of Medical Research and Innovation), semi-annually (International Journal of Advanced Medical and Health), quarterly (International Journal of Medicine), bimonthly (Annals of Family Medicine, Academic Paediatrics), monthly (Indian Journal of Clinical Medicine), semi-monthly, biweekly or weekly (The BMJ, The New England Journal of Medicine, The Lancet).

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### **30.4 Are There Any MCI- or UGC-approved Journals for Publication in India?**

The MCI and University Grants Commission (UGC) have approved lists of journals publication which may be considered for recruitment, promotion and career advancement in universities and colleges. These are listed on their websites [2].

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### **30.5 What Is a Peer-Reviewed Journal?**

Most leading medical journals are ‘peer reviewed’, i.e., the articles submitted to them are sent for scrutiny and approval to two or three other experts in the same field before a manuscript is accepted. This is done to ensure their quality and their suitability for publication. In most cases, the reviewers are ‘blinded’, i.e., do not know who the authors of the paper are, so that the manuscript succeeds or fails on its own merit, not the reputation of the author [3].

Peer review helps in improving the standard and quality of journals. However, the process has been criticized (by a disgruntled minority) as ‘slow, expensive, ineffective, something of a lottery, prone to bias and abuse, and hopeless at spotting errors and fraud’ [4].

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### **30.6 What Are Predatory Journals?**

Predatory journals accept all articles submitted to them, do not send them for peer review and print quickly. They are money-making enterprises that charge huge fees. There has been a surge of these recently. They are viewed as predatory because academics are deceived into publishing in them for the sake of adding to their CVs, although they may be aware that the journal is of poor quality and fraudulent. They actively solicit articles by haranguing and attracting gullible young academicians. It is estimated that there may be more than 10,000 predatory journals and 60% of articles published in predatory journals receive no citations over the 5-year period following publication. Predatory publishing is perhaps a manifestation of the ‘publish or perish’ phenomenon with authors willing to pay [5–7]. More than 80% of

predatory journals have origins in India. They are prompt to publish and in a few instances, the article may appear online in 2 days [8, 9].



### 30.7 What Are Open Access Journals?

Open access is a practice through which biomedical manuscripts are distributed online, free of cost to readers as well as for downloading. One of the major advantages of this type of publication is an increased visibility of the paper [10]. It is thought to be the best solution for the majority of developing countries. In 2003, the philosophy of open access was defined in the 'Berlin declaration on open access to knowledge in the science and humanities'. The names of the open access journals can be accessed on the website DOAJ [11, 12]. The various types of open access are:

1. Golden route—they are provided open access by the publishers. They may ask the authors for processing charges which can be paid by either the author or the institute to which he or she belongs.
2. Hybrid route—there is a subscription charge for the journal, the articles are free for the readers but processing charges are taken from the authors. Many journals are following this route.
3. Green route—in this, the author needs to deposit the entire text to a trusted repository and the full text can then be read and downloaded according to that database.

4. Diamond route—this model is fully funded by the library and there are no author processing charges.
5. The major issue with open access journals is the cost of publishing. While some offset some of these costs from authors from low-income countries, others do not and hence this cost can be prohibitive for some of them (between 2000 and 4000 dollars per article). More recently some funders will pick up these charges but only if budgeted in international grants.



### 30.8 What Are e-Journals?

Most reputed journals publish print and electronic versions for each issue. If the publication is in an electronic format on the Internet alone, it is called an e-journal. Many readers find electronic journals to have several advantages over traditional printed journals. They help in searching, downloading, storing and sharing the articles.

However, the new MCI guidelines specify that publications in most e-journals will not be considered for promotion. This guideline is probably a response to the propagation over the past years of predatory journals, which are almost exclusively among e-journals [13].

### 30.9 How Should an Author Choose a Journal to Which to Submit His Manuscript?

Submitting a manuscript to an unsuitable journal is a common error and can cause journal editors to reject the document without even sending it for peer review. Choose a journal that matches your scientific research. Some of the factors you should consider are:

- Look at the content of the journal—basic research or clinical work?
- Which audience do you need to target—general physicians or specialists?
- What is the type of article you need to publish?
- What is the reputation of the journal?
- What is the interval between submission, acceptance and publication?
- Would you prefer an open-access journal and are you ready to pay the author processing charges?
- Publishing in a peer-reviewed journal and indexed journal is difficult at the first attempt but if your work is really good go for these first.

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### 30.10 Conclusions

- There are criteria requirement by the Medical Council of India regarding which journal to publish for promotion in an academic institution.
- Submission to a journal by matching your article with the journal type.
- E-journals are usually thought to have poor scientific content compared to print publications.

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