Stepping In.....

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About the Author

Dr. C. V. Hegde is Editor-in Chief of 'The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology of India'. He is also Professor and Chief of Unit at the T N Medical College and BYL Nair Hospital, Mumbai. He is also Visiting Consultant at the Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital, Mumbai. He is an Endoscopic surgeon at the St Elizabeth's Hospital Mumbai. He has had a rich teaching experience of more than three decades and has taught and trained a large number of undergraduate and postgraduate students in that duration of time. He has been a postgraduate and undergraduate examiner in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Bombay University and the Maharashtra University of Health Sciences. He runs the PICSEP program of the Journal and FOGSI under whose aegis, ten programs in research methodology are conducted all over the country every year. This program aims at improving the quality of original research papers being submitted to the journal. He has several research

papers published in this journal and several other journals of standing. He is the winner of the prestigious FOGSI Corion award in the senior category. He has more than 50 videos on the You Tube on all aspects of vaginal and endoscopic surgery, solely for the purpose of furthering medical education. His other interests include non-fictional reading and reading blogs on Indian history and contemporary politics.

At times I wish there was a formal course in training to be an editor, more so if one were stepping in the shoes of an editor in chief, a grandiose title indeed but bereft of any perks and privileges, accompanied though by a host of responsibilities to several entities. This title that should ordinarily rest lightly on one's head like a laurel wreath (a la Julius Caesar) often turns out to be a crown of thorns. Unfortunately since no formal training exists, one has to rely on the years of apprenticeship spent in gleaning this art from illustrious predecessors who spared no effort to

enhance the quality of the journal to its present state, and there were many ...

The editor is responsible to the parent society, the authors, the peer reviewers and most of all the readers. While the editor would be conscious of the funding of the journal being the responsibility of the parent society, likewise the parent society cannot and should not interfere with editorial freedom in any manner whatsoever. There has to be a mutual respect between the appointing parent society and the editor to allow for a harmonious working system.

Contributing authors articles have to be treated with urgency and respect. Confidentiality has to be maintained by double blinding, and data which is often the result of years of hard work has to be protected. Authors have a right to expect their articles to be dealt with quickly. A rejection can enable them to submit their article elsewhere whilst the

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data is relatively fresh. Therefore, the turnaround time (TAT) of the article should be as quick as possible.

Authors too can help themselves by submitting articles which make an interesting read and which are topical. The first few paragraphs determine the fate of an article's readability as far as the reader is concerned. Plagiarism has reared its ugly head now and then, but these sporadic cases have been firmly dealt with and recommendations made to permanently blacklist these authors. Indeed now such 'offenders' would be reported to their respective institutions for further punitive action to be taken. The Editorial manager is a system which helps reviewers and editors to detect plagiarism without much effort and would be offenders are duly put on notice.

Peer reviewers too have to understand how a timely review goes a long way in reducing the TAT vis-a-vis the author. There are peer reviewers across the board who take their job seriously and submit well-researched reviews with penetrating queries to the author. Once again there is no training course to qualify to be a good peer reviewer; these are skills that get better on the job provided an abiding interest and curiosity of the reviewer continues.

At present this journal is indexed with PubMed Central which is distinct from PubMed. The aim has always been to be indexed with PubMed, and there has been a concerted effort over years to move rapidly in this direction. It is the desire of any author to get published in a journal indexed with PubMed—the Holy Grail of indexing.

Good original articles are the lifeline of any journal that aims to be indexed at the highest level (PubMed). Case reports are not of great value as far as indexing at this level goes. However, some case reports which are of great practical value to the reader will still get published. An association funding any journal would be well advised to publish guidelines/protocols in a separate booklet or post it on its website. Any conflict of interest between the parent body and the editorial board regarding journal content in such matters should always tip in favour of the journal especially when there are serious efforts to raise its profile and get it indexed at the highest level.

An 'impact factor' (IF) of a journal can be gauged only after it is indexed with a reputed indexing agency for a period of 3 years. The Thomson Reuter IF is calculated by the average number of citations the articles in the journal receive. Higher the IF, greater the research quality value of the journal.

The program for the inculcation of scientific enquiry and pursuit (PICSEP) is one initiative introduced by the journal (firmly backed by FOGSI) which has seen ten societies host workshops in research methodology all across the country. This program has driven home the value of submitting well-researched, statistically sound original articles in a correct study design mode, which are the flesh and blood of any medical journal. The journal has seen a distinct improvement in the quality of articles submitted since PICSEP started. The value of research methodology has been driven home due to PICSEP.

At present the journal is in a good space, and I would like no changes to be made right now. Along the way a few changes could be envisaged simply because new demands may have to be met with new responses. I believe the interaction between authors and readers is minimal at present and needs to be ramped up. Constructive valid critiques of articles could be published, and the authors held to account.

The editorial board has to work in synchronicity with contributors, readers, peer reviewers and the parent body to ensure maintenance of high standards.

I would be always open to suggestions from one and all in making the journal a 'look-forward-to' experience and once again reiterate the value of submission of topical interesting original articles which help make the journal an interesting read.

As an editor I shall be 'dotting the i's and crossing the t's', something I learned from my mentor.

Dr. R. D. Pandit very early on when I started out from the most junior post in the Editorial board. I learned a lot as his apprentice. However, the learning process never ends