

Students@nmji and the road ahead

On the 30th anniversary of its establishment, the *National Medical Journal of India (NMJI)* decided to rekindle its student section and looked for students to create and maintain Students@nmji. It was active between the years 2008 and 2010 to allow students to learn the editorial process and publish their opinions, issues and research.

We witness a trend of undergraduate medical students in India getting interested in scientific research. This is manifest by their increased participation at scientific conferences and a larger number of students availing the Short-term Studentship Scholarship (STS) of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Further, the revised MBBS curriculum that stresses on competence also includes research methodology and ethics as important aspects of becoming a doctor in India. In such a scenario, a scientific journal that encourages students to think and write in a scientific manner and publish their own research is the need of the hour. This section of the *Journal*—of the students, by the students and for the students—aims to provide a platform to discuss opinions, debate contemporary issues and share experiences with other medical students in India as well as inform peers, teachers and policy-makers.

For over a decade, the student section of the *Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR)* has been publishing peer-reviewed scientific research done solely by Indian medical undergraduates. *Praxis*, a journal operated by students of the Armed Forces Medical College, has been publishing undergraduate research for the past 3–4 years. Internationally, journals such as the *American Medical Student Research Journal*, *Harvard Medical Student Review (HMSR)*, *The International Journal of Medical Students* and the *Student BMJ (British Medical Journal)* publish reviews, case reports and original research done by undergraduate students.

For the upcoming editions of Students@nmji, the themes include: Opinion articles, Experience as an undergraduate medical student, Interviews with eminent personalities, critical analyses of diseases in popular culture and letters to the editor. The manuscripts we received covered a wide array of topics, ranging from the importance of quizzes in improving medical education to substance use. Such diverse and creative content has been exceptionally motivating for us. We plan to include original research and review articles in our future editions.

The team for Students@nmji consists of undergraduate medical students, supported by the working committee of the *NMJI*. We solicit articles mainly by conducting fortnightly writing challenges, a general call for papers and by a direct request to experts. The manuscripts that we receive go through a double peer review process, first by the students, then by the usual peer review system of the *NMJI*, ensuring the quality and credibility of published articles. This process also helps the students receive feedback on their reviews because for most of us, it is our first foray into the field of scientific journalism.

Though scientific writing is not an important part of the MBBS curriculum, it plays a pivotal role in one's career as a physician scientist, academician or even a clinician. Few medical students in India understand the essence of scientific writing. Many manuscripts that we received highlight that medical students tend to write scientific papers in a manner similar to creative writing exercises, which are more floral than informative. The lack of experience hampers expressing opinions in a logical manner. We aim to provide a solution to this problem through the process of peer review that includes detailed feedback and suggestions, and helping the young authors enhance their scientific writing skills. We also intend to organize workshops on both scientific writing and critical appraisal of manuscripts and articles for undergraduate students.

We encourage our young readers to write and contribute to the much-needed field of medical student scientific literature. To know more about the submission process, please write to *students@nmji.in*.

VARAD PUNTAMBEKAR
Intern

TONY GEORGE JACOB
*Working Committee, The National Medical Journal of India
All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi*
