

Editorial

Manuscript Flexibility: A Note for the Journal's Contributors, Reviewers, and Readers

Being mindful of the possibilities for types of scientific communications can help a researcher in choosing the right format for presentation and reporting. Original research articles, case reports, and review articles are the most common types of manuscripts submitted to and published by Iranian medical journals. But not all of the scholarly communications could necessarily be fit into these kinds of manuscripts; for instance:

- Journal editors/reviewers or experts of a field may wish or be invited to elaborate on a peer-reviewed and accepted paper and put it in a broader context. This kind of commentary which is published as the leading article in an issue of the journal is titled an 'Editorial.'
- Readers of a journal article may decide to comment on a published paper and/or seek clarifications; authors of the related original work would respond to those comments. This type of correspondence is known as 'Letter to the Editor'. Due to its independent nature, this kind of scientific exchange frequently provides invaluable insights into the subject of published research.
- Editorial boards and/or peer-reviewers frequently encounter manuscripts which have inherent limitations in the scope, relevance, priority, or originality, yet they find them otherwise integrated, polished, well-organized, and based on formal data collection. The journal may thus decide to publish an abridged version of the work. Authors are then expected to revise and summarize their work in the form of a short communication or 'Brief Report'.

In this issue, an Editorial by Professor Chams on ocular melanoma is published. In this article the professor has highlighted the importance of epidemiologic studies about ocular malignancies and major findings of the study namely, uveal melanoma in children and a relatively overrepresentation of female patients.^{1,2}

Also a 'Brief Report' by Zare et al is published.³ They had conducted a fellow-eye-controlled trial for the comparison of posterior capsule opacification (PCO) severity and rates of single-piece and three-piece hydrophobic acrylic intraocular lenses. The manuscript was carefully reviewed by the journal reviewers in two rounds; reviews were generally favorable but they noted a fundamental flaw in the study end-point, i.e. the mean follow-up of six months of the study is not enough in the evaluation of PCO. Editorial board provided authors an opportunity to rewrite and resubmit their work in the form of a preliminary report due to the overall integrity of the manuscript.

This approach conforms to our current policy in the editorial board of being 'facilitative' rather than 'selective'. The Journal -as the official publication of Iranian Society of Ophthalmology- perceives dissemination of research work by Iranian scientists in the field of ophthalmic knowledge to the national and international audience as its duty (the Journal's mission statement). In the future when our -mostly national contributors' experience in research is improved and there is a manuscript backlog, adoption of a more selective approach would be advisable.

The Journal manuscript scheme is as follows:

- Original Article
- Case Report
- Review Article (Evidence-based Update, Meta-analysis, and Expert content)

Such reviews may have CME credits.

- Editorial
- Letter to the Editor (in reference to an earlier published paper)
- Brief report (a preliminary report or short communication)
- Others: Surgical Technique, Ophthalmic Images/Videos, and Book Review

Scientific communication is far diverse than what has been described here; *Clinical & Experimental Ophthalmology* lists 11 types of manuscripts and describes articles such as 'Clinical Controversy' and 'History of Ophthalmology' along with the classic types.⁴ *British Medical Journal* accepts 'Obituaries', 'Personal view', and 'Fillers' for publication. It also has a major type of manuscript titled 'Practice' which itself has nine subtypes including 'Lessons of the week'.⁵ Such versatility infuses the journal with identity and makes it lively.

Editorial board of the Journal aims at achieving excellence through continuous improvement of its editorial process. We have planned to inform you of the current developments and sincerely seek your most valued opinion. At your discretion, your feedback will be published as 'Letter to the Editor'.

S-Farzad Mohammadi, MD

S-Mehrdad Mohammadi, MD, MPH

Jamshid Bahlakeh, MD

Hormoz Chams, MD

The Journal Editorial Office

References

1. Prof Chams Editorial
2. Ocular Melanoma article
3. Zare MA, Heidari H, Hashemi H, et al. Comparison of short-term posterior capsule opacification rates between single-piece and three-piece hydrophobic acrylic intraocular lenses. *Iranian Journal of Ophthalmology*. 2008;20(2):50-51.
4. *Clinical & Experimental Ophthalmology*. <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/submit.asp?ref=1442-6404&site=1>.
5. *British Medical Journal*. <http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/types-of-article>.