

Science and Human Deliberation in Medical Publications

What is human deliberation, a trait of thoughtfulness in action or decision making [1]. What is science, a system of acquiring knowledge through factual methods! Science is a tool to be utilized by human deliberations which can then lead to formation of treatise, production of a commodity, reinvention or betterment of an existing product, or for that matter creating an academic publication in a Journal. The entire premise of academics is based on two pillars; Science and Human Deliberations, and Journal articles should be the medium to bring out and showcase both these. In current phase of Evidence Based Medicine there is a trend toward focusing more weight on the science rather than the thought process that initiated and sustained the science.

Since its inception one year back JOCR has tried to establish a platform for both these elements, however as a scientific journal we face certain limitations. We do expect articles in a rigid format from the authors. Most of our authors would have received mails from our own Editorial Office to format their articles as per Journal guidelines. These guidelines are essential for indexing our Journal and articles with indexing bodies and are as per standard recommendations. By doing this we limit the author's ability to bring forth their deliberations when managing the cases, when facing complications and when taking a view point that does not resonate with current 'Literature'. And if we really introspect, most of us will be really interested in knowing the exact thought process of the authors and not only the exact science of the paper or what literature says about the Case. Although discussion part of the article allows for some of these deliberations to be put forward, however the official job of a discussion in a journal article is to put the results of the scientific inquiry in context with the current Literature. This allows little elbow room for deliberations unless they are in accordance with the current literature.

Does this mean we are here to concur or contradict the literature? Doesn't every scientific publication potentially rest on premise of something totally new? At Journal of Orthopaedic Case Reports we have tried to allow such deliberations from authors in section called 'Clinical Message', however until recently it contained only a summary of the paper. We shall be including a new heading in every article from the next Issue called "Authors Corner". This will allow a separate section for authors to put forth their own personal deliberations about the case report, technical note or case series they are publishing. We believe Level V evidence is as important as any other level of Evidence (read it as 'Expert' opinion) and every article in every Journal should have a separate section like 'AUTHORS CORNER' to highlight it.

We propose the 'Authors Corner' to be written in third person with names of the authors and their personal opinions about their Publication. This may also be in a format of chronological history of the case and how every author was involved and has deliberated over the publication. "Author A recognized the case in OPD, consulted author B who suggested doing an Investigation X. Author A and B deliberated on the best management plan and decided to operate using Y implant. Author C was involved to collect the data and do a review of Literature. Article was written and drafted. Literature review helped authors to look into other modalities of management of the case. Any further deliberations of the authors about if they would have still managed the case in the same way, or if literature and their thought process

about the case have changed their view can be included”. We shall not define a rigid format for this but will have to keep a word count limit to it. Authors will be asked to provide this part of the article once their article is accepted for publication. We hope this will allow authors a free voice to speak out in normal tone outside the scientific formality where they can directly connect to their readers.

Author's corner is one tool through which JOCR will be taking up the cause of Human Deliberation in Scientific Publication; however it is not the only one. We will be starting two more regular Features called “CASE STUDY” AND “CASE APPROACH”. Case study will be based on a new format of presentation of cases. We are planning it to be a complete representation of the thought process of the surgeon, including the environment of practice, surgical experience, difficulties, how they were overcome and patient considerations if any. A detailed guideline will be put up on the website soon and the first article will be included in the next issue as template. Case Approach will be invited articles from expert on how they approach a particular case scenario. To begin with commonly presenting cases will be discussed with the expert and their thought process on management of these cases will be noted. The team of Indian Orthopaedic Research Group will add literature to it and the entire publication will then undergo peer review. This has been planned in terms of readers' participation too. Readers can suggest common case scenarios that present to them and their questions to expert regarding approach to such cases. A sense of Co-authoring the paper will be the premise of this feature.

On a separate note, a new Journal will be added to our publication list. First announcement for Journal of Medical thesis has been included in this issue. This journal has received much appreciation and has a very Academic Editorial Board including members of ICMR and HOD's of many departments. The first issue is planned in February 2013.

These are new ideas and with every new idea we do anticipate difficulties, however as a journal which has created its own identity amongst many journals of Orthopaedics, we are ready for the challenge. Our reviewers, Authors and Readers are our strength. The Indian Orthopaedic Research Group, the International Orthopaedic Research Group and the umbrella of International Organization of Research Group has supported us and has helped in gaining confidence in taking such bold steps. We are thankful to all our associates

As we move ahead in the Second Year of JOCR which shall focus on the “Re-marriage” of Science and Human Deliberation, we hope our readers will find the effort sincere and also helpful to them and their patients.

Regards...

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