

EDITOR'S PAGE

A letter to the editorial office



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Dear *Spinal Cord* reader,

Every editorial office, such as *Spinal Cord's* in Antwerp, has its ups and downs. Many times it is a room that is serene and calm, sometimes it is bustling—with letters arriving, phone calls from authors, to do lists, speedy computer work, discussions, and deadlines. It is never boring. Some of the letters that come in make a special impression, such as the one from Dr Farooq Azam Rathore (of the Spinal Rehabilitation Unit, in the Armed Forces Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Pakistan) who entitled it 'Publishing in *Spinal Cord*: Random musings of a young researcher from Pakistan'.

The letter reads:

'Dear Editor

This is with reference to your editorial 'Editorial business' in the April issue. It reminds me of the time when I wrote my first manuscript four years back about the epidemiology of spinal cord injuries in the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. The following were some of the comments my colleagues and seniors gave me, when I asked them where to submit the manuscript: Don't send your article to an international medical journal. *Spinal Cord*!! What are you talking about? You are a junior resident. Don't you think *Spinal Cord* is beyond your scope? Well the manuscript looks good but nobody accepts manuscripts from residents in an international journal. Just send it to the local journal. I never blamed them for their mostly negative and discouraging remarks. Working in a developing country with a primitive culture of biomedical research and publications, nobody expected a junior resident in Rehabilitation Medicine to come up with a manuscript on an aspect of SCI which had not been reported before in the biomedical literature: the epidemiological pattern of SCI after an earthquake. Research on SCI in Pakistan was limited and there was only a single original research article published internationally from Pakistan. At the urging of my teacher Dr Kiyani (the first ISCoS member from Pakistan) I decided to submit to *Spinal Cord*. I was pleasantly surprised that they never asked about my qualifications, work experience or my academic status during the submission process. These are the things that many a times guarantee a favourable response to a manuscript in Pakistan, even if there is no substance in it. The submission process was smooth and quick. The reviewers were quick to respond, although revisions took a few months, this being my first effort. On 26th November 2006 I received a message from the editor of *Spinal Cord*: 'I am pleased to inform you that your manuscript has been accepted for publication.' There was no looking back after that. I have published 4 manuscripts in *Spinal Cord* so far and wish to contribute more. As a young researcher from an underdeveloped region of the world I have always encouraged my fellow colleagues to submit their manuscripts to *Spinal Cord*, for the following reasons:

1. The instructions to authors are clear and easy to understand.
2. Submission process is smooth and user friendly.
3. Review process is quick and very efficient. I have always found the reviewers' comments very helpful in revising my manuscripts and making them even better for publication. Online publication makes it possible for others to read and evaluate your research before it comes out in print.
4. *Spinal Cord* has an international audience and the editorial office always strives to accommodate SCI research from all corners of the world. As Prof. Wyndaele once wrote to me in a decision letter 'It is the role of ISCoS to encourage work worldwide'.
5. You need not to be a Big Name in the field, a Head of a department or an academic figure to publish in *Spinal Cord*. It is the quality of the work which matters.

Disclosure: I was not always as lucky as I was with my first manuscript. Two of my manuscripts were rejected: One during the initial editorial review'.

Looking forward to receiving your work
JJ Wyndaele