

An Editor-in-Chief's Reminiscences

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As the time comes to pass on the baton of Editorship of the IJHBT, I look back with satisfaction and pride at the course of the journal over the last 6–7 years. A modern medical speciality journal is a very complex intellectual, organizational, logistic and financial enterprise at many levels. Therefore, it is gratifying to see the progress that I, along with my team of Associate Editors was able to achieve during this time. I am grateful to Dr. Prashant Sharma and Prof. Pankaj Malhotra, both from PGIMER, Chandigarh for providing active support.

At the onset of my term in 2013, the challenges facing the IJHBT seemed almost insurmountable. The huge backlog of accepted-but-unpublished articles, the vast majority of them being case reports, the delayed review process, and the generally poor perception and visibility of the journal even within India were very saddening.

But I had a vision for this journal. And with that in mind, I first set about appointing an energetic, multi-generational and multicultural editorial board with a range of skills and expertises from across India. Luckily, committed persons whose aspirations for the IJHBT aligned with mine and whose personalities and styles were amenable to teamwork were found early and everyone was willing to put in their best.

The next step was to have frequent interactions within this group, to ensure that everyone was on board with what was going on, and so that the flow of ideas as well as their implementation were free-flowing. We had at least 2 physical meetings every year, one exhaustive mid-year congregate at AIIMS, New Delhi and another stock-

taking one usually on the sides of the Haematocon conferences, which almost everyone attends at the year-end. The senior team of Springer-Nature was always a part of these meetings, and I recall Dr. Naren Aggarwal, Executive Editor observing more than once that we were the most active editorial board in his experience. Springer's journal statistics were threadbare discussed in these meetings and scope for improvements were discussed. All the proceedings in these meetings were meticulously minuted, and these minutes and were then circulated to the entire team. This helped take stock at the next meeting, which always began with checking how much of the prior agenda had been achieved/implemented.

Increasing pages-per-issue from about 70–80 to 190, reducing time from acceptance to publication in a paginated issue from nearly 1.5 years to about 6 months, finishing off case reports by clearing the backlog in supplementary issues, overhauling the instructions to authors and especially tightening the word limits, speeding up review/response times by making Springer regularly email summaries of articles pending with them to all Associate Editors, introducing Best Reviewer Awards and Reviewer Acknowledgements, publishing conference overviews to raise the journal's and the ISHBT's profiles and enhancing readability by dividing articles by themes that were consistent across issues—these were just a few of the steps I took.

These efforts bore fruit and today, I can leave the journal with very little unfinished business and confident in the knowledge that this foundation will enable it to soar to even greater heights. The impact factor takes 2–3 years to show results, and our team's efforts will continue to yield rewards even after we leave. If I do have any lingering wishes, it would be that the increasing numbers of bright and talented young blood, the numerous DMs, fellows and

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post-doctoral scholars passing out of the several hematology (lab as well as clinical) courses in the country should become a part of this enterprise, whether as reviewers, or as contributors of high-quality manuscripts.

In the end, I like to believe that as the Editor-in-Chief I could, with the help of many people and organizations, infuse energy and excitement into the IJHBT and a sense of

engagement in its readers. It was a privilege to lead the journal's growth in the last 6 years and it will be an even greater pleasure to see it grow further in the years to come.

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