



The Egyptian Journal of Community Medicine; Current Status and Future Directions

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The Egyptian Journal of Community Medicine (EJCM) is published by the Egyptian Community Medicine Association (ECMA) on a quarterly basis.¹ The journal covers a wide spectrum of research topics addressing current public health issues and challenges. It is a regional journal focusing on Egypt and other Middle Eastern and African countries that share similar public health challenges. From January 2020 through the first week of June 2022, the editorial board of the EJCM accepted 118 manuscripts for publication, which represents 70% acceptance rate (Figure 1). Approximately 80% of them have been already published in full manuscript on the journal web site. The other 20% are currently published in abstract form prior to full manuscript publication under the “Articles in Press” service.¹ The later has been activated in 2022 to shorten the duration between the acceptance and online publication. This activation resulted in dramatic reduction in the time to publication from more than 6 months to approximately 2.6 weeks (Figure 2). We are currently working to reduce the duration from submission to decision, which was estimated at 46 days during the last 2.5 years.

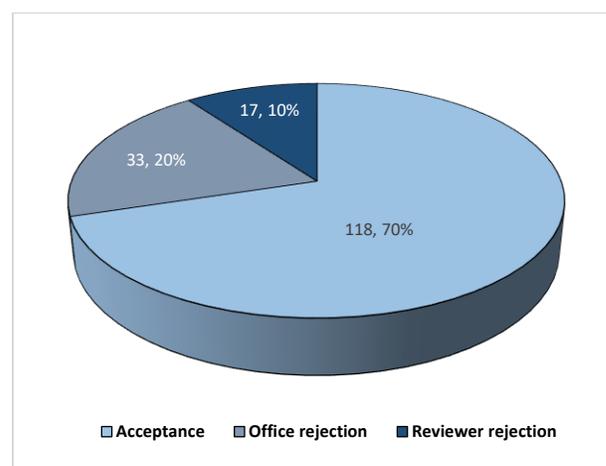


Figure 1: Decisions on manuscripts submitted to the EJCM between January 2020 and June 2022

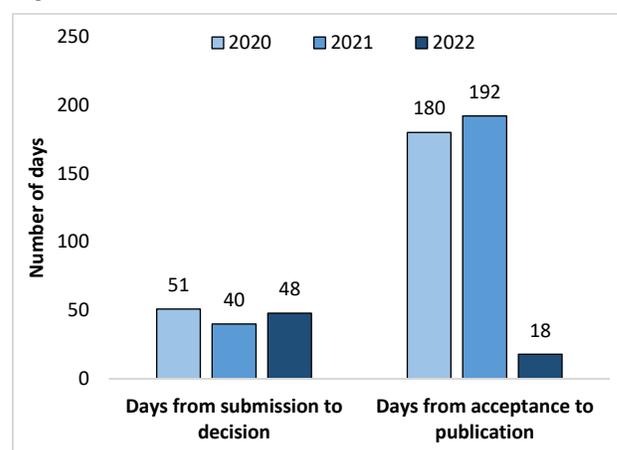


Figure 2: Duration from submission to publication of manuscripts submitted to the EJCM between January 2020 and June 2022

On the other hand, a total 50 manuscripts have been rejected during the same duration, which represents 30% rejection rate (**Figure 1**). It is worth noting that this rejection rate does not include manuscripts that were either withdrawn by the author or deleted by the editor. The later usually happens when the author does not successfully complete the EJCM requirements for initiating or completing the review process. Approximately 66% of the rejections were office rejection that usually happens within few days from submission. This type of rejection usually happens when the topic is outside the scientific scope of the journal, the topic is not adding so much to the filed, similarity check shows more than 30% plagiarism percentage, the basic scientific components of a manuscript are not met, the design is clearly flawed, or the submission found to be a duplicate submission.² Interestingly, 26% of the rejections were decided after reviewing the manuscript by external reviewers who recommended against publication. As other journals, the main reasons for rejection after review were flawed design, poor reporting, and inappropriate analysis that are difficult to fix.³

My message to fellow researchers in Egypt and nearby counties who are planning to submit manuscripts to the EJCM is to ensure meeting the requirements of successful submission and to avoid common mistakes.⁴ They are urged to take a tour in the journal web site before submission, specially the “Guide for Authors”.¹ This would definitely reduce the probability to send the manuscript back to authors for correction and resubmission. This is frequently happens when the authors do not fill required forms including

completely filled title page, conflict of interest form, and declarations and copyright form. Among the common mistakes that require corrections before moving forward with the review process are submissions not following the guidelines for creating tables and figures nor the guidelines for formatting citations and references. Additionally, submissions with high percentage of plagiarism cannot be processed and ethically is not acceptable. Finally, English proofreading and editing by a reputable English Proof-editing Service is highly encouraged, specially when almost all our submissions are created by non-native English speakers.

Readers of the EJCM may have already noticed several modifications in the EJCM editorial board members, web site structure, journal information, pre-prepared journal-specific forms required for submission, review process, final manuscript format, and activation of pre-print publication. The purpose of these changes are to ensure meeting the basic international publishing standards required for online indexing of scientific journals. Indexing the EJCM in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)⁵ and PubMed⁶ is our next goal. This is expected to increase the visibility of our articles in search engine, augment the reach of our message to new audience, and to better serve the needs of our authors. Although meeting the requirements of online indexing is a long tough process specially in the lack of commercial publisher, we believe that dedication of EJCM editorial board and our committed authors would make it eventually successful. Finally, we still need to expand and regularly update the journal pool of national and international reviewers and to encourage more

contributions of regional & international researchers.

The new editorial board members are a group of prominent national and international scientists with high impact in public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, and infectious diseases.¹ They were selected from reputable institutions in Egypt, Gulf countries, and Africa. On behalf of the new editorial board of the EJCM, we would like to thank the honorary Editor-in-Chief; Professor Abdel-Hady El-Gilany and Professor Mohsen Gadallah for their sincere efforts towards the EJCM and the public health discipline. Thanks are also extended to Professor Olfat Farag and the leaderships of the ECMA. The new editorial board members are committed to continue the same path taking into consideration the new challenges.

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