

EDITORIAL

First decade of publishing Bosnian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences

Bakir Mehić, Amina Valjevac, Faruk Skenderi

Bosnian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences, Cekalusa 90, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Bosnian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences (BJBMS) is an international English-language, peer reviewed journal, publishing original articles from different disciplines and predominantly basic medical sciences. The first issue was published in 1998, followed by a four year period without publication. The second issue was published in February 2002 and since then the BJBMS has been published regularly and in a timely fashion. As BJBMS is now approaching its 10th year anniversary of continuous publishing, we believe that it is time to evaluate the achievements in this period.

Trends in manuscript submissions to the BJBMS

The number of articles published in 2002 was very low. Later, the number of published articles steadily increased over the years reaching its peak during the years of 2006-2008 when the BJBMS was publishing 69 and 70 articles annually (Figure 1). It is obvious that most articles published at this point originated from the B&H affiliating institutions

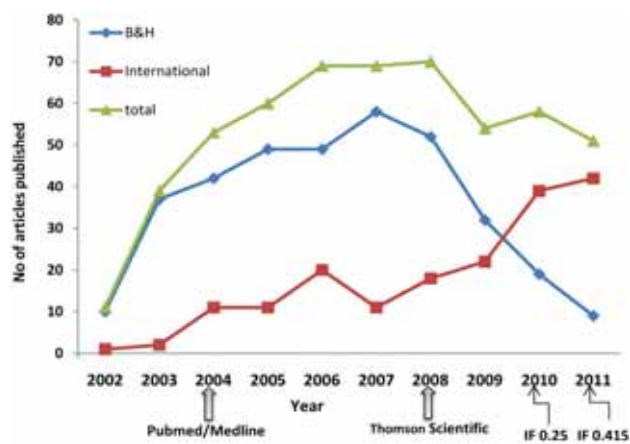


FIGURE 1. Total number of articles published in BJBMS during 2002-2011 from B&H and international affiliating institutions. An international manuscript was defined as at least one international affiliation of the authors. Thick arrows indicate inclusion of the BJBMS in scientific databases and thin arrows indicate first two impact factors received from JCR.

and only small proportion of articles were from abroad. Due to the lack of the submission tracking at that time it is not possible to conclude whether the low number of published international articles is a result of the low number of submissions outside B&H. We believe that this is the most likely case. During this time the editorial policy was to attract as many scientists originating from B&H and working in the developed countries to publish their work in BJBMS. The most international articles published during this time-frame were coming from the B&H originating scientists, who were conducting their research in the mainstream settings. Two events were especially relevant for the editorial work in the journal. These were the inclusion of the BJBMS in two major bibliographic databases: PubMed/Medline in 2004 and the Thomson Scientific in 2008. Another very important event in March 2009 occurred; making the journal available in free full text on the Internet and subsequent inclusion in the Open Access databases (Figure 1). In 2008, the inclusion of BJBMS in the Science Citation Index Expanded (Thomson Scientific) database, the free availability of full text articles on the Internet and the first Impact Factor, marked another period for the journal which required

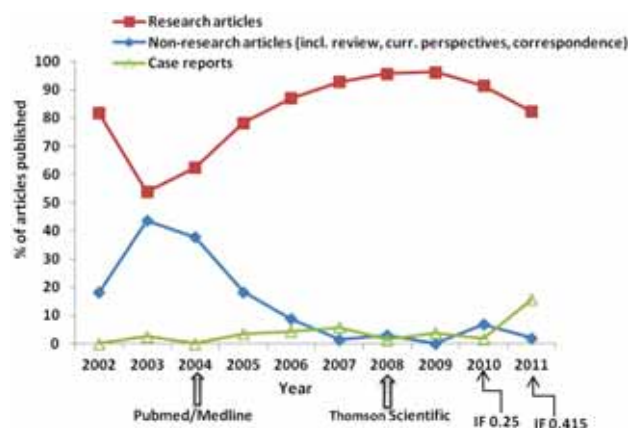


FIGURE 2. Percentage of articles published in BJBMS during 2002-2011 according to the type of manuscript. Thick arrows indicate inclusion of the BJBMS in scientific databases and thin arrows indicate first two impact factors received from JCR.

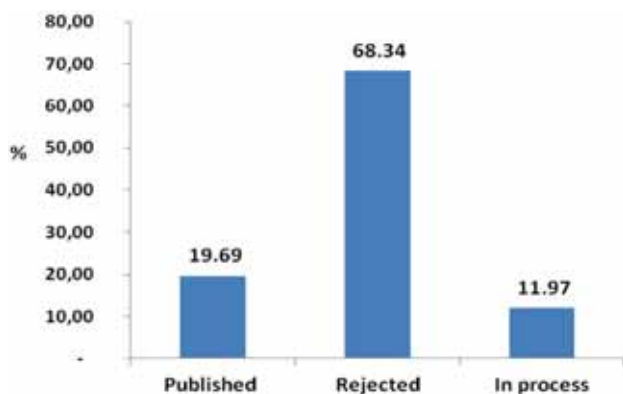


FIGURE 3. Percentage of published, rejected and in-process articles submitted from January to October 2011 for the BJBMS volume 11.

the change in editorial policy and editorial activity. From this time point, the Editorial office faced two significant changes: constant increase in articles submissions and an increase in international articles (data not shown). Those changes allowed the Editorial Board to raise the acceptance threshold and filter the high quality research articles followed by subsequent increase in the rejection rates. The Editorial Board simply had more good articles to choose from. From 2008 onward, there was a constant decrease in the total number of articles published annually as a result of Editorial Board's increased quality criteria for articles acceptance (Figure 1). Already in 2004, upon the inclusion of BJBMS in the Pubmed/Medline database, there was a change in the type of articles published. In 2002, the original research articles accounted for 62% and in 2008 for 96% of all published articles (Figure 2). From February 2004 to August 2011, 560 articles were published and indexed in PubMed.

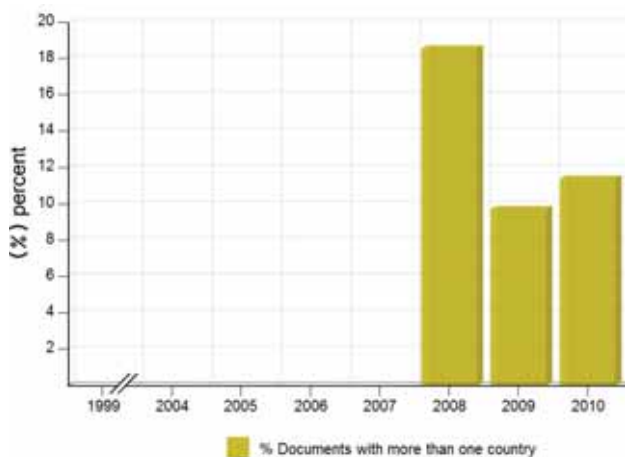


FIGURE 5. International collaboration in the articles published in Bosnian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences. International collaboration accounts for the articles that have been produced by researches from several countries. The figure shows the ratio of the journal's documents signed by the researches from more than one country [3].

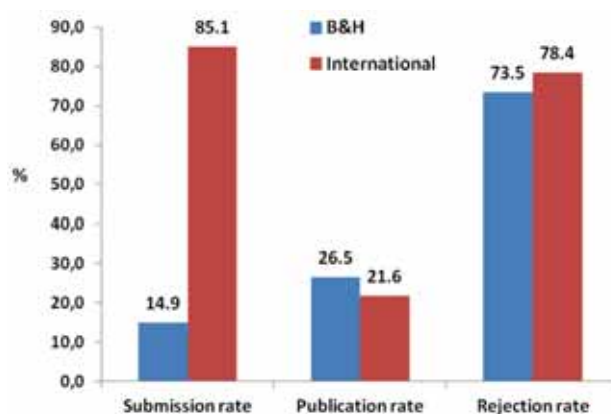


FIGURE 4. The outcome of the articles submitted to the BJBMS volume 11 according to the affiliation(s) origin of the authors. International origin of the manuscript was defined as at least one international affiliation of the authors.

Fate of submitted manuscripts – the role of editors and reviewers

From January to October 2011, the Editorial office received total of 259 articles: 86% were research articles and 12.7% case reports (Table 1). In total 177 (68.3%) articles were rejected, 19.7% were published and almost 12% are still in process (Figure 3). Therefore, excluding the articles still in process, we can calculate the overall BJBMS rejection rate for 2011 to be 77.6% which is quite high and close to the rejection rates in other mainstream journals. According to the Editorial Policy Committee by World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) [1] with wishes to respect journal's constituents and improve the quality of BJBMS, Editorial decisions are definitive.

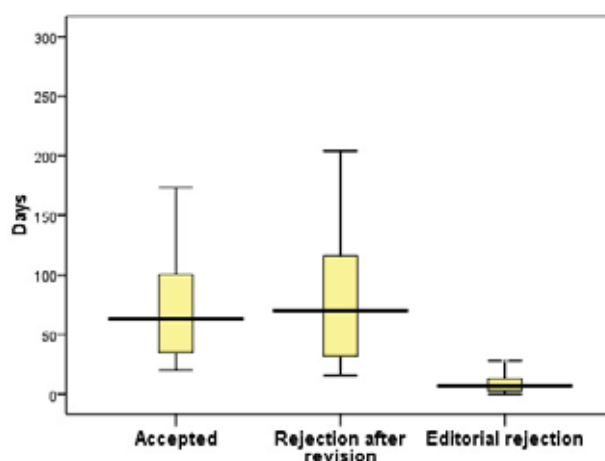


FIGURE 6. The median time for the articles processing as measured from the date the manuscript was submitted to the date when the final notification regarding the manuscript's outcome was sent to the corresponding author for accepted and rejected articles. The data are presented as median and interquartile range. The horizontal line within the box represents the median, while the box represents lower and upper interquartile range and the vertical lines indicates maximum and minimum values.

TABLE 1. The outcome of the articles submitted to the BJBMS volume 11 according to the manuscript types and field of research.

Articles processed in 2011	Published N (% of submitted)	Rejected N (% of submitted)	Editorial rejection N (% of rejected)	Rejection after revision N (% of rejected)	In process (N)
Total submitted (N=259)	51	177	159 (89.8%)	18 (10.2%)	31
Manuscript types					
Original research	42 (21.4%)	154 (78.6%)	137 (89.0%)	17 (11%)	
Non-research (incl. review, curr. perspectives, correspondence)	1 (33.3 %)	2 (66.6%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	
Case report	8 (27.6%)	21 (72.4%)	21 (100%)	0	
Field of research					
Clinical research	26 (21.5%)	121 (78.5%)	110 (90.9%)	11 (9.1%)	
Basic research	25 (48.1%)	27 (51.9%)	21 (77.8%)	6 (22.2%)	
Public health	0	29 (100%)	28 (96.6%)	1 (3.4%)	
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Another important change occurred from 2008 onward; significantly more articles that were published originated from international affiliating institutions (Figure 1). This could not be explained by the negative selection of the B&H articles, but rather by the lower submission rates from B&H compared to the previous period. In 2011 the submission rate of the B&H articles was 14.9 %. However, publication and rejection rates were similar for B&H (26.5% and 73.5% respectively) and outside B&H (21.6% and 78.4%) originating submissions (Figure 4). These changes were probably associated with changes in the Editorial board and office structure that occurred in 2008 and again in 2010 whose main goal was to remain

free of all possible influences on articles processing, in concord with Editorial freedom, by the definition of International Committee of Medical Journal Editors [2] (Figure 5). From 2010 and onward, there was a constant increase in editorial rejection rate reaching almost 89.8% of rejected papers (Table 1).

For a small journal coming from scientific periphery, the review process itself is burdened with problems of making a pool of reliable reviewers, subjectivity of assessment and shortage of objective criteria. Therefore, the BJBMS Editorial policy to serve as a strict gatekeeper was strengthened by the fact that reliable reviewers, are out of most importance who should not be additionally burdened with the submissions that did not have good-enough data to stand the strict review evaluation or were out of scope in the first place. Our policy in cases of editorial rejection is to send the authors comments on their article and sometimes, for those that were out of scope, the suggestion of another journal to which they can submit their manuscript. We also analysed the median turnaround time for the

TABLE 2. Scientific Indicators of Bosnian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences for years 2004-2010, developed from the information contained in the Scopus® database (Elsevier B.V.)

Indicators	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
SJR	0,000	0,038	0,036	0,040	0,032	0,032	0,038
Total Documents	53	60	69	69	70	72	79
Total Docs. (3years)	0	53	113	182	198	208	211
Total References	256	388	108	9	1.134	1.524	1.702
Total Cites (3years)	0	4	15	22	34	45	79
Self Cites (3years)	0	0	0	0	4	4	7
Citable Docs. (3years)	0	53	113	182	197	205	204
Cites / Doc. (4years)	0,00	0,08	0,13	0,12	0,17	0,21	0,36
Cites / Doc. (3years)	0,00	0,08	0,13	0,12	0,17	0,22	0,39
Cites / Doc. (2years)	0,00	0,08	0,13	0,11	0,15	0,24	0,47
References / Doc.	4,83	6,47	1,57	0,13	16,20	21,17	21,54
Cited Docs.	0	4	13	19	28	37	52
Uncited Docs.	0	49	100	163	170	171	159
% International Collaboration	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	18,57	9,72	11,39

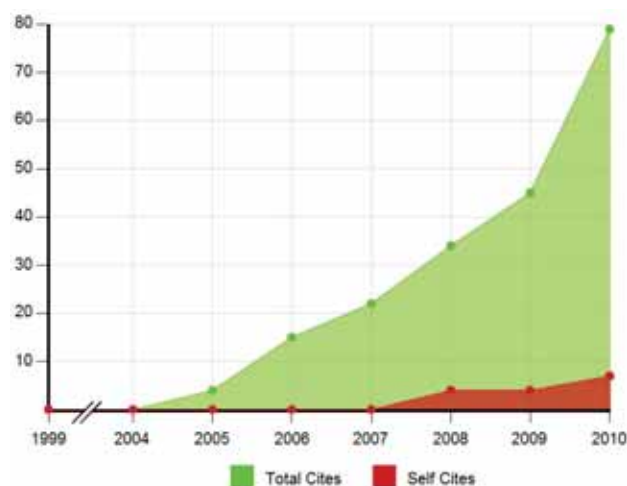


FIGURE 7. Evolution of total number of citations and journal's self-citations received by the journal's published documents [3]

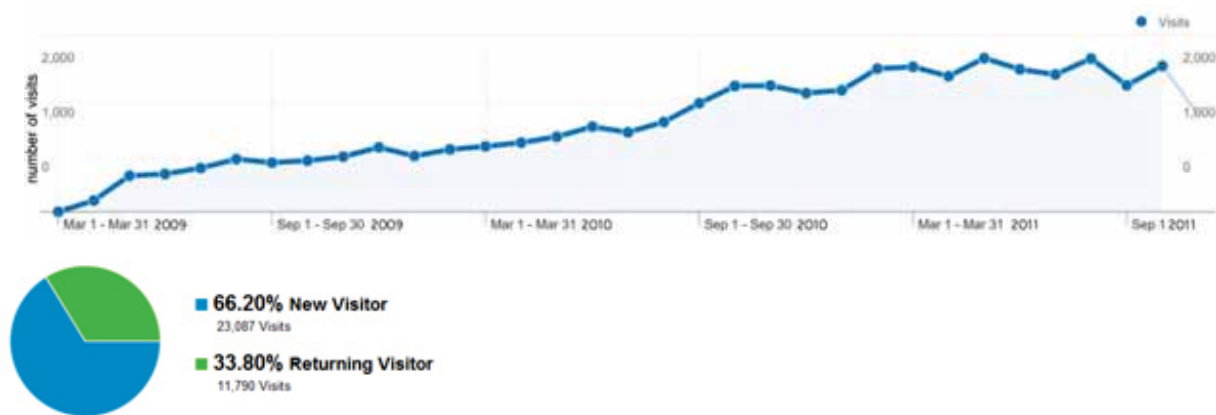


FIGURE 8. Visibility of the Bosnian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences. Starting March 2009, with its availability on the Internet, the visibility of the Journal had increased several times. The visits to the web site of the Journal www.bjbms.org steadily increased over time, reaching almost 2000 visits per month, mostly from the international academic community (5).



FIGURE 9. Geographic distribution of the visitors (A) and top ten countries by visits (B) of the Journal’s web site www.bjbms.org from March 2009 to November 2011. There were more than 36.000 visits from all over the world (5).

articles processing as measured from the date the manuscript was submitted to the date when the final notification regarding the manuscript’s final decision was sent to the corresponding author. The median time for editorial rejection was 7.0 (3.0-13.0) days and for the accepted and rejected after revision articles it was 63.0 (34.5-100.75) and 70.0 (31.5-118.0) days respectively (Figure 6).

Scientific impact and visibility of journal

The growth in number of scientific articles can be followed with the indicator of measures of scientific influence on the average article in BJBMS. As shown on Table 2, there is continuous increase in scientific impact of an average article of the journal (from 0.08 for 2005 to 0.46 for 2010). In the same period there is an increasing number of total cites with less than 10% self cites (Figure 7) (3). Today, visibility of content of the BJBMS through the web site (www.bjbms.org) is very well [4]. We notified more

than 36.000 visits from the March 2009 to November 2011 (Figure 8). It goes without saying that the largest number of visitors comes from Bosnia & Herzegovina (Figure 9), 66.2% of new visitors, and 33.8% of returning visitors (Figure 8).

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