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Editorial

Coronavirus Disease 2019 and Research Paper Publication

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was first identified, on December 19, 2019, in Wuhan, Hubei China. It is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV-2). Though it was identified in December, the first case was traced back to November 17, 2019. The novel Coronavirus (nCoV) was isolated on 7 January 2020.^{1,2} With its capacity to transmit rapidly and cause fatality, the global health crisis was declared on 11 March 2020. Since then, the curiosity among the treating physicians and clinical researchers were overwhelming. In medical science, unless it is not documented, it is considered that it didn't happen. Furthermore, experience sharing is a very important tool of learning and communicating that help in the management of COVID-19. One of the very important ways of information sharing is the publication of research papers. With the outbreak of nCoV-2, research papers and preprints are appearing every day. By January 30, 2020, more than 50 research papers have been published.³ This outburst of research papers regarding COVID-19, has been able to elevate the confidence of the treating physicians.

From the nature of the nCoV, the course of the disease process and various management strategies have helped the physicians/communities/nations to act accordingly. In Nepal, the first COVID-19 case was confirmed on January 13, 2020. By the end of March, only 5 cases of COVID-19 was confirmed. Based on the knowledge gained from, the published research papers, Nepal was able to prepare triaging criteria, a protocol for quarantine and isolations and the physicians were comfortable preparing treatment modalities. From the available information, the government was able to disseminate preventive measures such as social distancing, regular and proper handwashing techniques, and self-isolation. Because of these preventive measures, though 7173 confirmed cases till 17th June 2020, there is still no evidence of community spread.⁴ Additionally, according to the analysis, just 29.1% of studies tracked by the global register ClinicalTrials.gov have the potential to produce significant findings.⁵

All these prove the importance of publishing research papers. However, there is also imperativeness to publish their research to get recognition. Furthermore, conflict of interest may also make authors to submit manuscripts with tampered data. Until now, 26 research papers were retracted, 3 were temporarily retracted and 1 expression of concern was issued.⁶ So as to avoid similar conditions, journal editors and reviewers play a crucial role. As the views of a journal grow, the responsibility of the editors increases exponentially. The editors and reviewers always should abide by the publication ethics code, the Committee of Publication Ethics' Code of Conduct, and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' recommendations. The World Association of Medical Editors' states that medical editors should also take into account whether studies are ethical and whether their publication might cause harm to the readers or the public interest.⁷ During this COVID-19 pandemic and a similar situation in the future, editors should be following all the steps meticulously and should investigate any concern raised by the reviewers despite the author is renowned. The reviewer also should be extra cautious while reviewing the manuscript. The journal editor should not rush to publish preprint, to increase the visibility of the journal. Hence, abiding by the code of conduct from the author, reviewer, and editor make the published research paper beneficial to the researcher, editor, and the entire community.

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Correspondence:

Dr. Shiva Raj KC, MD

Editor-In-Chief, Nepalese Medical Journal

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2107-5322

Email: shivarajkc074@gmail.com

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