

The Introduction of “Junior Editor” Posts Within Journals

The use of subeditors by medical journals is crucial to their overall ability to provide a timely, efficient, and high-quality editorial service to their readers and authors. However, every subeditor's career starts with a first post with a journal. This can be at best, a smooth transition for the journal, but at worst, may result in a baptism by fire that results in the reduced quality of publications and deterioration in the quality of service given to authors.

The Clegg Scholarship is offered by the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ),¹ and it is a position whereby the recipient works with the editorial teams of both the *Student BMJ* and the *BMJ*. The *Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland Student Medical Journal* also offers a junior editor post, which is open to medical students to provide an opportunity to gain experience in the editing of a medical journal.² These positions offer experience with the editorial teams of these prestigious journals.

Other than these, there are very few, if any, postgraduate editorial trainee posts, and these undergraduate opportunities are quite rare and appear to be vanishing.³ Therefore, it can be deduced that the majority of subeditors and editors appointed to journals are inexperienced for their first appointment.

A previous survey found that editors of clinical journals are usually “self-taught, part-time editors,”⁴ in which 35% of editors had not served on the editorial team of their journal before being appointed to their position. Additionally, 69% of the responding editors believed that further training would be beneficial.⁴

We suggest that by introducing positions within journals for both undergraduate and postgraduate trainees, journals could reduce the potentially nega-

tive impact of these transitions by an inexperienced member of the team to an experienced subeditor or editor. This would also allow the recipients of these positions to improve their understanding of how to critically appraise their own work, while also improving the quality of their own research.

Journals are the lifeblood of furthering education; therefore, within each journal's organizational system, why should these not be the instigators of educational programs to enable future generations to produce better journals?

Perhaps publishers and journals should take some responsibility for providing training for their current and future editors⁴ and instigate a more formal process.³

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