

Lamk Mohamed Al Lamki MD, FRCPC, FACR, FACNM Editor-in-Chief 2006-2020

Samir Al-Adawi

LAMK MOHAMED AL LAMKI HAS SERVED AS the Editor-in-Chief of Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal (SQUMJ) for the last 14 years. When he took the helm of the Journal, he embarked on dual mandates. The first was to ‘unclog’ the existing infrastructure to deliver timely and quality issues of SQUMJ. He first set out to acquire an office as the ‘home’ of SQUMJ and the staff responsible for managing it. Under his stewardship, the office was set up, so the team was recruited. SQUMJ thus blossomed to offer a venue for capacity-building among the cadre of young aspirants for careers in the field. Such undertaking diverges from the common wisdom of the means and know-how that only major publishing houses have to establish a journal with a stellar reputation. As there is no ‘degree’ that qualifies one to work in the Journal office, through trial and error, the skills of the team in the office slowly but surely leapt and bound with efficiency; hence SQUMJ began publishing four issues per year.

To celebrate the newly established rhythm, the Journal simultaneously underwent a metamorphosis. It was renamed from “Sultan Qaboos University Journal for Scientific Research - Medical sciences” to “Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal”. The change of identity coincided with the new momentum, namely, to fulfil Al-Lamki’s second mandate, that is, SQUMJ to become the window to the world of medical research from Oman and other emerging economies. To increase the visibility of this window, SQUMJ embarked to be featured in international bibliographic databases. In the world of the south-north divide, it is often an insurmountable task for a journal from emerging economies or the global south to be indexed in international databases.^{1,2} Al Lamki’s tenacity prevailed as SQUMJ was indexed in PubMed.³ To date, SQUMJ continues to receive submissions from all corners of the world.

Al-Lamki’s persistence owed its beginning to his interesting biography. His exposure to diverse environments during his upbringing seems to have

resulted in some very positive qualities, such as flexibility and adaptability. He spent his childhood in the Sultanate of Zanzibar and studied medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin, Ireland. As a physician, he had roamed many landscapes—including Toronto (Canada), New York (USA), Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)—before switching his academic hat when he moved to Texas, USA, where he was endowed with a tenured professorship at the University of Texas-Houston Medical School and Adjunct Professor at the Baylor College of Medicine. In 2004, he came to Oman and served many roles including the role of Editor-in-Chief of SQUMJ.

As a torchbearer of such exemplary tenacity, I see the challenge and opportunity on the horizon as I take the baton from Al-Lamki. The next challenge is to secure an Impact Factor for SQUMJ. Another aspiration is to keep pace with the fast-shifting sands of the world of publication and concurrently keeping the Journal abreast with international best practices within the background of diminishing resources and challenges posed by so-called predatory journals and other amorphous research and publication malpractice. Even amid the perceived challenges on the horizon, the inspiration and motivation of Al-Lamki will remain our navigational tool. My mantra is that SQUMJ, like knowledge and education, should develop further and not return to its original dimension. This echoes the statement of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, of which the Journal bears it name: “Knowledge is renewable, and we have to add something new to world knowledge.”⁴

Professor Lamk Mohamed Al-Lamki, on behalf of the SQUMJ’s Board of Trustees—Academic Publications Board, my colleagues in the Journal’s office, our esteemed associated editors and international advisory board, as well as many authors and readers across the world, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you for your unstinting dedication to the service and the growth of SQUMJ, and very best wishes for your well-deserved retirement.

References

1. Confraria H, Godinho MM, Wang L. Determinants of citation impact: A comparative analysis of the Global South versus the Global North. *Res Policy* 2017; 46:265–79.
2. El Rassi R, Meho LI, Nahlawi A, Salameh JS, Bazarbachi A, Akl EA. Medical research productivity in the Arab countries: 2007-2016 bibliometric analysis. *J Glob Health* 2018; 8:020411. <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.08.020411>.
3. Al-Busaidi IS. MEDLINE® Indexing of the Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal: A great leap forward for biomedical research and publishing in the Gulf region. *Sultan Qaboos Univ Med J* 2017; 17:e123–4. <https://doi.org/10.18295/squmj.2016.17.01.025>.
4. Highlights from the Speech of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said During His Visit to Sultan Qaboos University on May 2nd, 2000. From: <https://www.squ.edu.om/About/HMVisits> Accessed: Jul 2021.