

**EDITORIAL****RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION SCENARIO FOR PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE IN MALAYSIA**

The Malaysian health care services is often acknowledged to be a model for other developing countries. But we are ambitious towards becoming a 'developed country' by 2020. Our public health medicine profession need to be in line with such national ambitions and ultimately be on par with our colleagues in the developed countries. In our endeavor to move the public health medicine arena to greater heights, research and publications must be an integral part of the package. A true professional in public health medicine includes being active in research and publication. And this is where focus should be made as many Malaysian public health professionals lacked the research and publication background. In this era of evidence based action and reaction, this deficiency will be glaring. The Malaysian Public Health Specialist Association publishes the MJPHM to promote research and publications in the field of public health medicine in Malaysia. I hope that this journal has to a certain extent been able to move this important agenda.

Being tasked with this important agenda, the Editorial Board have been accommodative to the varying levels of writing proficiency of our public health researchers. We considered MJPHM as the entry level for publication and we accept manuscript submissions from all spectrum of public health medicine. The level of rejection of manuscripts submitted is very low. The dearth of manuscripts submitted to MJPHM is still a major and chronic problem. The 'writing culture' has not cemented into many Malaysian public health specialists. The specialists training has equipped public health medicine students with strong basics in research and writing, and many of them are required to do research and write theses and dissertations before graduating. However, many of the research and thesis writing work stops their journey there without making the final jump to publication, where others can learn from the research work done. How do we change this wasteful mindset? Do the graduates need further courses, workshops, study visits and attachments to the centers of public health excellence to be researchers and publish? There was a time when many

Malaysian public health doctors rushed for publications because it was made one of the criteria for promotion and eligibility for a specialist's allowance. We need to get our heads together to resolve this issue for the sake of public health professionalism in Malaysia.

As before, this issue consists of manuscripts on a wide range of public health issues in Malaysia and I would like to thank the authors for submitting their manuscript to MJPHM. This augurs well with the mission of MJPHM to promote local public health specialists to publish. Developments in the higher education scene in Malaysia will be a factor in the near future. The mushrooming of medical and health institutions throughout the country will add to the mass of academicians in public health medicine. The strategy in having a few universities designated as Apex and Research Universities will further strengthen the research agenda. If the dictum 'publish or perish' holds true, the national research and publication scene will be pushed forward in the near future.

An important development at the MJPHM Secretariat is the change in the leadership. This issue will be my last as Chief Editor. I was privileged for the stint since 2003, which has enriched me with new experience, skills and friends. I am grateful to our Malaysian Public Health Specialist's Association for this privilege. The new MJPHM Chief Editor is Dr Zainuddin Mohd Ali from the Ministry of Health Malaysia. He will be supported by a new team of editors to help steer MJPHM to greater heights. I wish him and his team all the best in this noble cause for public health professionalism in Malaysia and offer him my support in making this a reality. To my editorial team, a big thank you from me for all your support. And to the MJPHM Secretariat hosted at the Department of Community Medicine, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kubang Kerian, your support has certainly made my editorship easier and finally, my gratitude to my department and institution for their support.

Zulkifli Ahmad,  
Editor,  
Malaysian Journal of Public Health Medicine