

National *versus* International Journals

Dr. Man Mohan Singh, Ph.D., D.Sc., FNASc

There is always a dilemma in the mind of a researcher when asked to classify his/her publications published in 'National' and 'International' journals particularly for the purpose of appointment or assessment for award, recognition or promotion. Needless to say, most researchers would like to be identified as publishing more/most in international journals. In the field of research, this may not be the criteria to question their patriotism, but a matter of National pride. Publishing in an International journal continues to be considered more prestigious than in a National journal even though some National journals might contain high quality research that can be accepted in many International journals.

What exactly do the terms 'International' and 'National' signify? What if an Indian researcher publishes his/her work in an Indian journal that has an Impact Factor higher than most International journals in that field? According to Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International>), the term 'International', first coined by the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham in 1780 in his publication 'Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation', is synonym for 'Global', and literally means involvement of, interaction between or encompassing more than one nation, or generally beyond national boundaries. The Free Dictionary (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>



Dr. Man Mohan Singh completed his graduation (B.Sc.) from Panjab University in 1967, post-graduation (M.Sc.) in 1969, Ph.D. in 1973 and D.Sc. in 1997 from Lucknow University. He was elected Fellow of The National Academy of Sciences, India in 1995. He worked at the Institute of Animal Physiology, Cambridge, UK and at Medical School, University of Birmingham, UK as WHO post-doctoral research fellow, and as Scientist at Schering AG, Berlin, Germany under DAAD funding. He served as ICMR Emeritus Medical Scientist, Chief Scientist, Head, Endocrinology Division and Research Coordinator at the CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow. He is an awardee of the NCERT Science Talent Search Scholarship and Medal, Lucknow University's KN Bahl Gold Medal and CSIR Raman Research Fellowship. Currently he is working as Director, R&D at Saraswati Dental College, Lucknow, India.

Director, Research & Development, Saraswati Dental College, Lucknow-227105, (UP), India.

Address for Correspondence:

Dr. Man Mohan Singh, Saraswati Dental College, 233, Tiwari Ganj, Faizabad Road, Chihat, Lucknow-227105 (UP), India.
Contact: +91 9415634056, E-mail: mmsingh@saraswaticolleges.com

international), too, defines 'International' as that extends across or transcends National boundaries or viewpoints and having members or activities in several nations, in contrast to 'National' that refers to something in the interest of or devoted to one's own nation and its interests. What then makes the hiring, promoting, awarding, funding, regulating, recognising or accrediting institutions/agencies to continue to use the 'National' *versus* the 'International' nomenclature to judge scientific quality of an individual or an institution?

According to Klaus Rotzberger (2008, German Economic Review 9:402–430), ranking of professional journals can provide objective information about the quality of publications in a world where academic publications have reached an overwhelming extent and variety. Ranking, according to him, can also correct misinterpretations, both with respect to journal quality and the importance of fields. Thus, ever since the start of journal ranking and Impact Factor calculation, the terms 'National' and 'International' to classify journals or publications appear inconsequential. However, while for a journal published in any country, the article submitted from any other country may continue to be referred as an 'International publication', but this should just represent scope, and not merit, of the published research. The journals may thus be classified as: (a) Institutional journal, which belong to and has been started by an individual or an Institution, (b) National journal, which belong to or has been started by a National institution or a National Society, (c) International journal, which belong to and has been started by a publisher/Society working at National/International level.

Then there is the difference between an 'International journal' and a 'Journal of International Repute', which is based primarily on criteria such as Impact Factor, Numbers in a Volume and number of publications from foreign authors, besides others. Thus, journals, irrespective of their status of 'International Repute', may better be categorized as 'National' (or 'Inland') journals and 'Foreign' journals, which appear self-explanatory terms, rather than 'National' and 'International' journals. Some believe that a publication may be called an 'International publication' when the subject under study has been discussed in an international perspective. On the other hand when the subject of study is relevant to only a specific country then it might be called a 'National or Inland publication'. Some even believe that

‘International’ and ‘National’ journal terminology is the tale of bygone era and in the modern age of information technology and internet facilities, each publication has its own identity, and its link with a journal is merely a formality.

Thus, using ‘International’ as prefix, does not necessarily

make a journal a ‘Journal of International Repute’. Using this prefix also appears to be a more recent phenomenon for a quest for international recognition, as there are many ‘Journals of High International Repute’ that do not have this prefix.