

SEAJME: 12 years of Progress

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Introduction

South East Asian Association of Medical Education (SEARAME) is one of the six regional associations under the umbrella of the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME, 2003), the global non-governmental organization dedicated to setting standards in medical education. SEARAME was established in 2006 with the aim of improving the quality and relevance of medical education in countries of the South East Asian region (SEAR) at all levels; undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional development. One of the main objectives of SEARAME is to encourage scholarship in medical education including educational research in SEAR countries. The South East Asian Journal of Medical Education (SEAJME) is the culmination of the SEARAME's vision to bring together medical educationists in the region and promote collaborative efforts toward uplifting the standards of medical education in the region and beyond through dissemination of research, evidence-based knowledge and information (SEAJME, 2007; Karunathilake, 2007).

Furthermore, Medical Education in the SEAR is going through rapid and extensive changes with new methods replacing conventional teaching and learning practices. Some changes seen in the developed world may not necessarily be the best for Asia while some may be driven by resource constraints (Karunathilake, 2007, Sirisup, 2008).

Therefore SEAJME would be the ideal platform for the medical educationists and medical teachers in the region to exchange ideas and share experiences in best practices in medical education in order to address academic quality improvement and enhancement of medical education practices based on the highest global standards (WFME, 2003).

The objective of this report is to provide a detailed overview and a critical analysis of the SEAJME's achievements to date.

Methods

A multi-method approach was used.

1. Analysis of the article submission database
2. Topic analysis of the all volumes and issues published from the inaugural issue to date.
3. Literature search and online search
4. Citation data obtained from Google Scholar

Country wise distribution of authors and categorization of articles were identified by topic analysis of all the articles published so far. Journal matrices were manually calculated based on the information provided in Google scholar.

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Results

Results are presented in the following sequence

1. History and the progress of SEAJME
2. Country wise distribution of authors
3. Categorization of articles
4. Journal Matrices
5. Indexing Status
6. Visibility and Dissemination

History and the progress of SEAJME

The proposal to initiate a journal for SEARAME was first proposed during the first Executive Committee meeting held in 2006 at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. This proposal was strongly supported by the WHO country office in Thailand, the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME), and the Consortium of Thai Medical Schools. In October 2007, SEAJME was ceremonially launched during the Association of Medical Education in Asia (AMEA) conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand (Sirisup, 2008).

The journal was initially published biannually from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. The contribution of the Chulalongkorn SEARAME secretariat in making SEAJME a medium for dissemination of good practices in medical education in the South East Asia Region has been immense (Sirisup, 2008). In 2014, the editorial office of the journal shifted to the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, whilst the Chulalongkorn secretariat continued with the online publishing processes.

The Coimbatore SEARAME secretariat, which was in operation from 2010 to 2017, supported the editorial office with publicity and dissemination responsibilities. WHO provided funding support from 2006 to 2014. Currently the in-kind support for hosting the journal is provided by University of Colombo and Chulalongkorn University, with funding support for editorial assistance provided by the College of Medical Educationists, Sri Lanka (Karunathilake, 2014, Karunathilake, 2018).

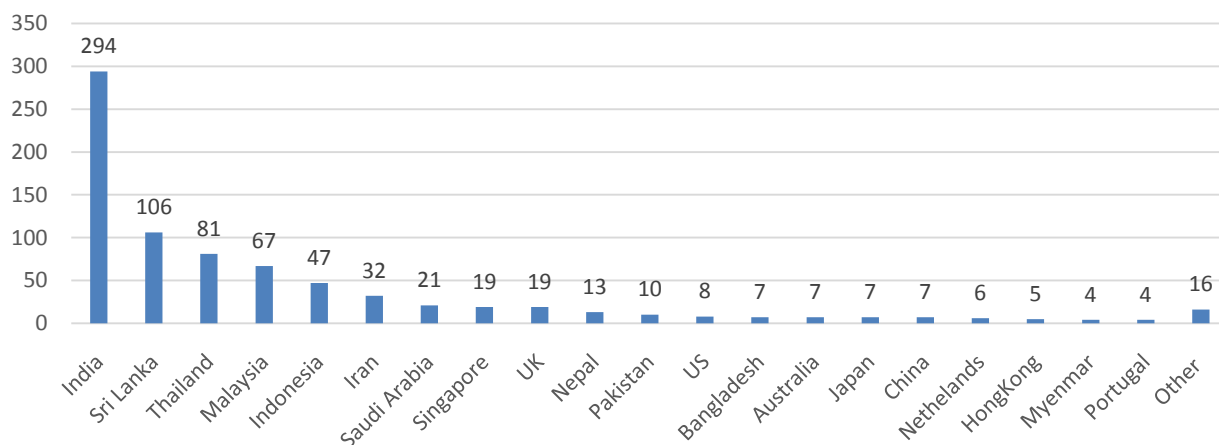
With the current issue (2018 June), we have published 12 volumes and 21 issues.

Country-wise distribution of authors

A total of 780 authors representing 34 countries have contributed to the journal. High impact researchers and renowned leaders in Medical Education, both globally and regionally, were among the authors (Figure 1).

Categorization of articles

A total of 278 articles were published during the time period of 2007-2017 under the categories of Leading Article, Country Paper, Original Research papers, Review papers, Short Communications, Outside the Box, Messages and Letters to the Editor. The most commonly published category was Original Research (131, 50%). Figure 2 shows the proportionate distribution of different categories of articles published.



*Other countries include Brazil, Canada, Chile, Israel, Kenya, Korea, Mauritius, Nigeria, Qatar, South Africa, Sweden, Vietnam

Figure 1: The country-wise distribution of authors

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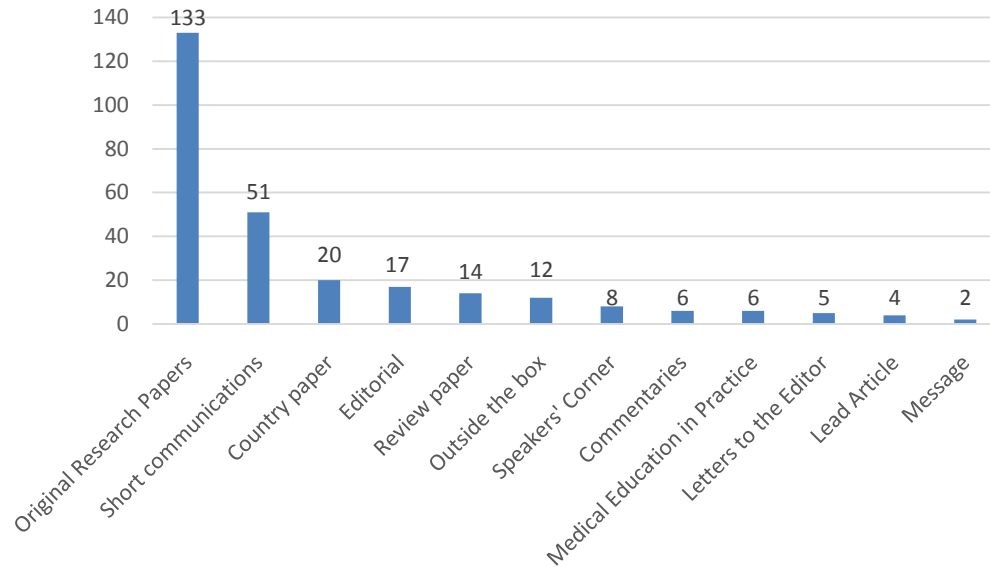


Figure 2: The proportionate distribution of different categories of articles published

Articles were categorized in 16 areas according to the following topics and content; Teaching and Learning, PBL, Clinical Teaching, Faculty Development, Technology Enhanced Learning, Curriculum development, Curriculum Evaluation, Assessment, Professionalism, Educational Environment, Community Oriented Learning, Teaching Basic Sciences, Student Support, Research, Postgraduate Medical Education and CPD, Trends in Medical Education and HRH.

Majority of the articles were on Teaching and Learning (67, 24%), followed by Trends in Medical Education (29, 10%), Professionalism (25, 9%), Community Oriented Learning (19, 7%), Technology enhanced learning (17, 6%) and Basic Science Teaching (16, 5%). The number of articles on Curriculum Development and Evaluation (11 in total) were comparatively low. Figure 3 shows the categorization of articles according to topics.

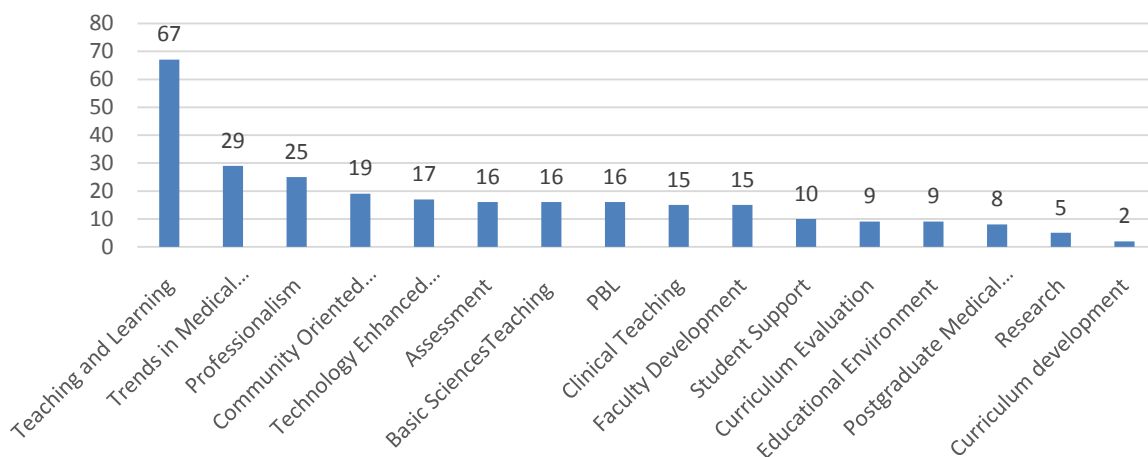


Figure 3: The categorization of articles according to topics

Journal Metrics

The quality of the articles published is evident by the growing number of citations. The journal H-index is 10. The 10 top performing articles published in SEAJME and the number of times they were cited according to Google Scholar (2018) is provided in the table 1. However, the impact factor (calculated based on citations provided by Google scholar) for 2016 is low (0.13).

Indexing Status

Initially the journal was indexed in IMSEAR (Index Medicus of South East Asia (SEAR), EBSCO open journals and catalogued in NLM.

Subsequently it was included in Google scholar and Directorio de Revistas de Educación Médica y Educación Superior.

The year 2018 showed a marked improvement in indexing status with the inclusions in Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research, Open Science Directory, ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors), Directory of Research Journals Index, Academic Resource Index (ResearchBib) and Free Medicus. We are in the process of preparing applications for DOAJ and SCOPUS (NLM, 2018, GFMER, 2018, ICMJE, 2018, ARC, 2018, Free Medicus, 2018, Open Science Directory, 2018).

Table 1: The 10 top performing articles published in SEAJME

Article	Citations
Unnikrishnan, B., Kulshrestha, V., Saraf, A., Agrahari, A. C., Prakash, S., Samantaray, L., & Parida, A. (2008). Pattern of computer and internet use among medical students in Coastal South India. <i>South East Asian Journal of Medical Education</i> .	44
Wickramasinghe, A., Widanapathirana, N., Kuruppu, O., Liyanage, I., & Karunathilake, I. M. K. (2011). Effectiveness of mind maps as a learning tool for medical students, <i>South East Asian Journal of Medical Education</i> .	42
Pande, S. S., Pande, S. R., Parate, V. R., Nikam, A. P., & Agrekar, S. H. (2013). Correlation between difficulty & discrimination indices of MCQs in formative exam in Physiology.	41
Lokuhetty, M. D., Warnakulasuriya, S. P., Perera, R. I., De Silva, H. T., & Wijesinghe, H. D. (2010). Students' perception of the educational environment in a Medical Faculty with an innovative curriculum in Sri Lanka.	40
Abraham, R. R., Fan, E. S. Z., Xin, G. N., & Lim, J. T. G. (2009). A report on stress among first year students in an Indian medical school.	38
Kumar, L. R., Voralu, K., Pani, S. P., & Sethuraman, K. R. (2009). Predominant Learning styles adopted by AIMST University students in Malaysia.	32
Olupeliyawa, A. M., Hughes, C., & Balasooriya, C. D. (2009). A review of the literature on teamwork competencies in healthcare practice and training: Implications for undergraduate medical education	28
Mahajan, A. S. (2010). Stress in Medical Education: a global issue or Much Ado About Nothing specific.	23
Ganguly, P. K., & Chan, L. K. (2008). Living anatomy in the 21st century: how far can we go	23
Thomas, M., & Raju, B. A. (2007). Are Power Point presentations fulfilling its purpose? <i>South-East Asian Journal of Medical Education</i> , 1(1), 38-41.	21

Visibility and Dissemination

Several leading universities and organizations worldwide including National University of Singapore (NUS) and Duke NUS, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, University of Auckland,

New Zealand, Mahidol University, Thailand, Bangkok Suvarnabhumi University, Thailand, Nova South Eastern University and Melaka Manipal Medical School have identified SEAJME as a key educational resource for their programmes. Furthermore, leading international

medical education organizations that use SEAJME for reference material include the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE, - Med Ed World); PSG-FAIMER regional institute; Saudi Society of Medical Education (SSME); Instituto de Investigación Practicum, Spain and College of Medical Educationists, Sri Lanka. Inclusion in databases such as freejournals.com and journals4free.com has further increased the accessibility and visibility (AMEE-Med Ed World, 2018, CENMED, 2018, FSG-FAIMER, 2010, WFME, 2007, CME, 2017).

Discussion

The journal has achieved significant milestones over the last decade. During the time period from October 2007 to June 2018, we have published 12 volumes and 21 issues with a total of 265 articles. There have been contributions from 780 authors representing 34 countries from all regions of the world. The number of articles, the diversity of topics and the distribution of authors are clear indications that SEAJME has firmly established its place as the apex medical education journal in the SEA region. The quality of the articles published is evidenced by the growing number of citations. The use of the journal as a resource by leading universities and organizations strongly suggests the success of improvements made in recognition and visibility.

The progress of SEAJME from 2007 to 2018 provides us with a sample of Medical Education research and publications in the SEAR. The findings from topic and content analysis are indicative of research interests, focus and the trends. The focus on areas such as professionalism, technology enhanced learning, community-orientation and PBL clearly indicates a trend towards innovative educational strategies. One important finding is the number of countries and researchers outside SEAR, especially from Malaysia, Singapore, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, UK, US, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Canada, who have made strong contributions to SEAJME. This is indicative of strong international collaborations SEARAME has achieved.

During the 11 years of existence, SEAJME has faced several challenges, logistical and financial. There were serious concerns regarding delays

in the journal process leading to a backlog. Over time we have successfully overcome all these challenges, now reaching on-time status with a well-established journal editing and publishing process. The editorial board was recently revised based on identified objective criteria such as the H-index, citation count, editorial experience, reviewer experience and contribution to SEAJME and SEARAME.

The low Impact Factor is a serious concern. It is lower than the impact factor in 2010 (manually calculated according to Google Scholar), which was 0.3. The main reason for the decrease is the increased frequency of publishing to clear a backlog. The impact factor can be expected to improve with on-time publication and recognition through indexing.

One of the main concerns regarding the journal was the indexing status, which has now markedly improved. With a well-established journal process that has evolved with time, we are now strongly positioned to apply for higher level indexing. The applications for DOAJ and SCOPUS are now under preparation. Having fulfilled the requirements regarding quality, process and timing, the challenges which are mainly technical such as obtaining Digital Object Identifiers (DOI), archiving, and meta tagging, can be readily addressed.

In keeping with SEARAME's objective of providing a platform for researchers and medical educationists in the SEAR region, we have adhered to a very strong open access policy. This stance will be a strong factor in achieving higher status.

Conclusion

SEAJME has now firmly established its due place as the apex medical education journal of the SEAR. We are steadily and gradually moving towards becoming a leading international medical education journal. SEAJME has overcome many challenges though hard work, perseverance and dedication of the Editorial team and the support provided by the Executive Committee and the Secretariat of the SEARAME. Hard earned achievements need to be consolidated and further improvements have to be made in a stepwise and methodical manner.

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