



## Al-Kindy College Medical Journal (KCMJ)

### Editorial

## Al-Kindy College Medical Journal: Benchmarks to Streamline the Desk's Workflow and Harvest New Milestones

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This editorial outlines key strategic benchmarks to enhance editorial workflow, publication quality, journal visibility, and scientific impact.

### Introduction

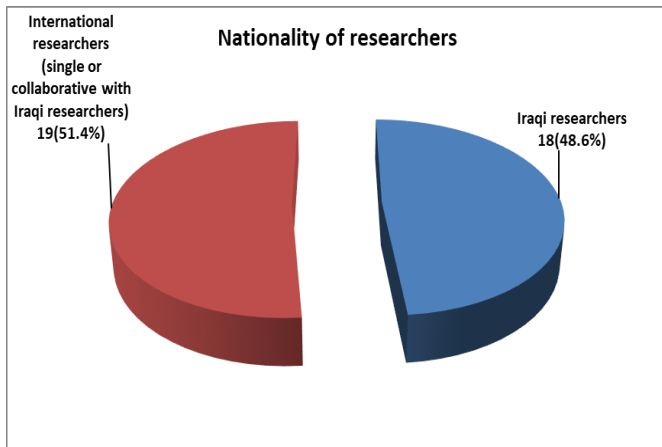
“Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.”

John F. Kennedy

Medical journals serve as vital platforms for disseminating comprehensive medical research, aiming to enrich international readers' medical knowledge and foster the frontier of medicine and medical sciences. As a result, several medical universities, professional health organizations, and medical colleges are currently striving to establish their own scholarly journals. The trend of continuing to set new medical journals by these bodies is expected to continue as long as medical knowledge and data expand, and the need to improve the health integrity of the world's populations has become more complex, demanding further advances. It is critical for these bodies to note that sponsoring a particular journal's long-term sustainability, credibility, and progression mandates given prerequisites and paramount criteria. With hard work over the past years, Al-Kindy College Medical Journal (KCMJ), which is released

by the Al-Kindy College of Medicine, University of Baghdad, has confidently established numerous partnerships and gained a mounting citescore. We are thrilled to address that the journal is now fully recognized locally and increasingly acknowledged both regionally and globally. This inspiring point is mirrored by the notion that, 19 (51.4%) articles out of 37 articles published in the year 2025 were authored by international researchers, whether single or collaborative with Iraqi researchers, compared to 18 (48.6%) articles authored by Iraqi researchers (Figure 1).

Our ambition to further promote the scientific march of the journal is endless. In particular, indexing the journal in the leading international databases of Web of Science, Wiley, Medline, Springer, PubMed, and PubMed Central is a prioritized milestone. We hereby address numerous benchmarks that help organize the journal's work system, enhance excellence, broaden impact, and advance positive scientific progress.



**Figure 1:** Nationality of researchers in KCMJ's articles in the year 2025.

Certain prerequisites are critical to ensure a particular journal's long-term sustainability. Among them, a cooperative, understanding multidisciplinary journal's teamwork is fundamental as no individual could accomplish the journal's administration alone. It is preferable to assemble young, astute, and professional faculty members who could direct time and effort to this academic pursuit. An editorial office with essential staff components such as editor-in-chief, section editor, editorial members from different disciplines, a computer/internet operator, an accountant, and a secretary/office assistant constitutes the minimum human resource support for the editorial office. In particular, the role of editorial members is quite essential as they review and correct linguistic and grammatical errors, amend readability issues, verify factual accuracy, and finally work closely with researchers to improve the article's quality. Moreover, holding regular meetings with the editor-in-chief and other editorial staff members necessitates having a professional capacity building to smooth editorial work. The financial resources of a particular journal must be adequate and sustainable to cover partnerships. Some aspects of the editorial infrastructure continue to evolve as the journal expands and receives an increasing number of submissions. The journal regularly receives a substantial number of articles from local and international researchers, and these articles have to undergo preliminary evaluation by the editorial board to assess their suitability before final evaluation by both local and international reviewers. Besides, the editorial team continues to manage increasing responsibilities as the number of submissions grows, and they often take on additional duties beyond the journal's routine editorial activities. With the growing number of submissions from local and international researchers, continued strengthening of the editorial infrastructure and expansion of international editorial collaboration will support efficient manuscript processing and sustained publication quality.

The journal currently uses the Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform to manage manuscript submission, peer review, and publication. While this system has facilitated editorial workflow and manuscript tracking, the anticipated increase in manuscript submissions may require the journal to explore more advanced editorial management systems in the future.

Literally, metrics means a set of numbers which give information about a giving activity or process. Journal metrics are usually referred to in estimating, comparing, and often ranking scholarly publications. The main metrics for medical journals are the following: journal impact factor (Web of Science Core Collection data); source normalized impact per paper (SNIP); CiteScore; Eigenfactor, SCImago Journal and Country Rank (SJR); and Google scholar metrics <sup>2</sup>. However, other data are sometimes incorporated within metrics such as total number of submitted manuscripts, acceptance/rejection rate, review time, and submission to acceptance time. Researchers and readers often refer to a particular journal's metrics to evaluate and compare with other journals. It would be pertinent for KCMJ to set metrics icon on the journals' website and regularly update data as that option could attract more attention for readership and motivate researchers to consider the journal for publication.

Though KCMJ has proudly managed and published increasing number of articles from international researchers which indicates that the journal has attained the interest of the readers and researchers associated with growing proportion of online access and citation of the articles published in the journal, utilizing different communication channels such as social media, meetings, conferences, emails ...etc to call for manuscripts could importantly further mount the journal's visibility, readership, and citations and, thus improves journal's metrics and milestones. Publishing researchers could pivotally help maximize the visibility, downloads, and citation potential of their published articles in KCMJ. We cordially encourage authors to share their work across the following distinguished platforms: ORCID (<https://orcid.org/>) by linking publication to author's ORCID profile and activate research identity; KUDOS (<https://www.growkudos.com/>) by explaining, sharing, and tracking the impact of research in plain language; LOOP (<https://loop.frontiersin.org/>), which is a research network designed by Frontiers that helps researchers increase their research visibility; ResearchGate (<https://www.researchgate.net/>) by engaging with a global research atmosphere and share full text; Academia.edu (<https://www.academia.edu/>) by sharing the published work with academic peers across different disciplines; Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>) by updating researcher's Google Scholar profile to guarantee a published article is indexed and cited; LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/>) by declaring the publication and connecting with global professionals in related disciplines; Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/>) by sharing a link, copying the URL, pasting it into a Facebook post, and finally adding author's own thoughts before posting; WhatsApp (<https://www.whatsapp.com/>) by sourcing the article from the KCMJ website to author's phone and sharing it with a WhatsApp contact or group as a document or a link within a message; X (previously Twitter) (<https://x.com/>) by announcing the publication employing relevant hashtags and tag relevant communities; and finally Mendeley (<https://www.mendeley.com/>) by adding article to researcher's Mendeley profile to boost discoverability among reference managers.

Notwithstanding, the Digital Commons Network, powered by Elsevier, offers free access to full-text peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, thesis, dissertations, conference proceedings, and other

scholarly works from hundreds of academic institutions and universities across the world and provides journal's editorial boards and researchers with an analytic tool to gauge the global impact of their work<sup>3</sup>. We believe that KCMJ's enrollment in this platform helps in proficient storage, management, and conservation of the journal's research data, eases the journal's visibility, streamlines workflow, showcases the journal's work impact and metrics, and facilitates international collaboration and engagement. Financial coverage of that enrollment creates a distressing barrier to be set aside.

There is a room to improve the quality of submitted manuscripts. We ask researchers to tackle topics in the field of medicine and medical sciences that are of high interest to readers, policy makers, and clerkships. In many instances, the editorial board has faced puzzling situations in detecting double submissions and/or prior publication of articles submitted to the journal. It is, therefore, pivotal for researchers to thoroughly follow the KCMJ's instructions to guarantee the transparency, validity, and reliability of their work. The journal reserves the right to take appropriate actions in accordance with established publication ethics policies should any violations be identified during the submission, review, or production stages. Such actions may include notification of the authors' institutions and restrictions on future submissions to the journal.

The KCMJ has noticeably encountered two distressing phenomena in submission process that often led to delay the processing process and questioned the originality of submitted research. The first is plagiarism, which is a worse kind of intellectual theft and it significantly breaches academic integrity and credibility. It ranges from deliberate cheating to non-intentionally copying of knowledge from a particular source without appropriate acknowledgement<sup>4</sup>. The second is referring to the artificial intelligence (AI) in writing and structuring research. Truly, AI delivers substantial intellectual contributions to the work such as designing and conducting the study, data analysis, and writing and editing the manuscript. However, it imposes significant ethical concerns such as privacy, bias, misinformation, absence of transparency, strangling creativity, actual authorship, and plagiarism<sup>5</sup>. With the increasing availability of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for scientific writing, their use in manuscript preparation has attracted growing attention. The journal allows limited use of AI-assisted tools for purposes such as language editing or formatting; however, AI systems cannot be listed as authors and cannot assume responsibility for scientific content. Authors remain fully accountable for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the submitted work, and any use of AI tools must be transparently disclosed in the manuscript. For the time being, KCMJ has to be cautious in following these guidelines. We honestly ask researchers to avoid plagiarism to the minimum and establish delicate equilibrium between leveraging AI's potential and honoring the dignity of human creativity, reasonable thinking, and ethical pitfalls. Despite the KCMJ's guidelines currently stressed that the plagiarism rate and AI use rate must not exceed 20% and 5%, respectively, the editorial board has to regularly practice monitoring these rates to cope with further technological innovations. Additionally, since AI-based technologies are growingly impacting different aspects of human activities worldwide, KCMJ is urged to

formulate policies on the AI-assisted peer-review process and AI-assisted journal's management.

It is critical to adopt rigorous reviewing process to define appropriate articles with sound scientific originality and content. After preliminary evaluation by editorial board, it is our priority to provide researchers with initial decisions within 2-4 weeks of submission to sustain mutual confidence with them. Reviewers are asked to critically and strictly review manuscripts highlighting the scientific integrity and language proficiency as well as weakness and strength of the manuscript under review. Despite the invaluable role of reviewers in safeguarding high standards and quality of scientific integrity in the research KCMJ publishes, the journal faces great challenges in selecting efficient reviewers in various disciplines who could complete the reviewing process in a timely manner. We have started planning a database for local and external reviewers, and those who are willing to take part as reviewers for the journal are always welcome. Setting up and regularly updating the reviewers' database, taking part in experts both locally and externally for manuscript reviewing, and selecting a convenient peer review system (single or double blind) are critical options for the editorial board.

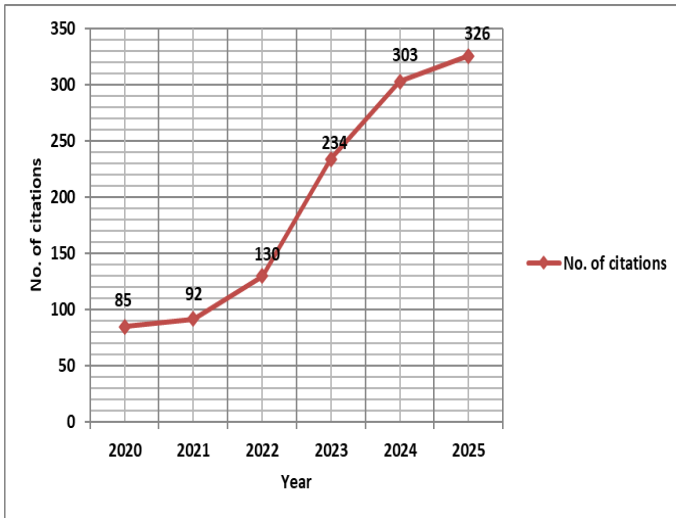
Despite meticulous care of the editorial board to correctly set the final format of published articles, errors whether in grammar, language, or design are inevitable. This inadvertent action could tremendously ruin the rightness of the article's scientific content. To minimize that risk, the editorial board need to undertake the option of sending typeset version of a particular manuscript to the corresponding author for proof checking before final publication to guarantee there are no scientific or topographic errors left.

In parallel with esteemed international journals, KCMJ has to hasten distribution of valuable research content through introduction of ahead of print service. Currently, this service is not present which might corrode the scientific originality of article once a delay in formal publication is inevitable. We believe that introducing that service will offer readers to access and read and researchers to cite articles, respectively before their formal publication. Consequently, improving the journal's confidentiality and metrics is envisaged.

Although the citation is a solid index for assessing the quality of scientific articles and scholastic journals and preserving the integrity, credibility, and progress of scientific biomedical knowledge<sup>6</sup>, KCMJ's citations by both local and international researchers are not yet totally weighty. Nevertheless, the number of journal's citations noticeably leapfrogged from 85 in 2020 to 92 in 2021, 130 in 2022, 234 in 2023, 303 in 2024, and 326 in 2025 (according to Google Scholar metrics, accessed 2026) (Figure 2).

The KCMJ must do its best to increase citations of its published articles. Apart from generally encouraging publishing high-quality articles, an effective tool is to increase the proportion of review articles. Indeed, the journal has a shortage in publishing this type of article. The journal published only 5 (13.5%) review articles out of 37 in 2025 (Figure 3).

Our goal is to publish more high-quality review articles which provide thorough insights into development and emerging trends in the field of medicine and medical sciences. One solution to overcome that shortage is to seek it from particular researchers/figures by invitation.

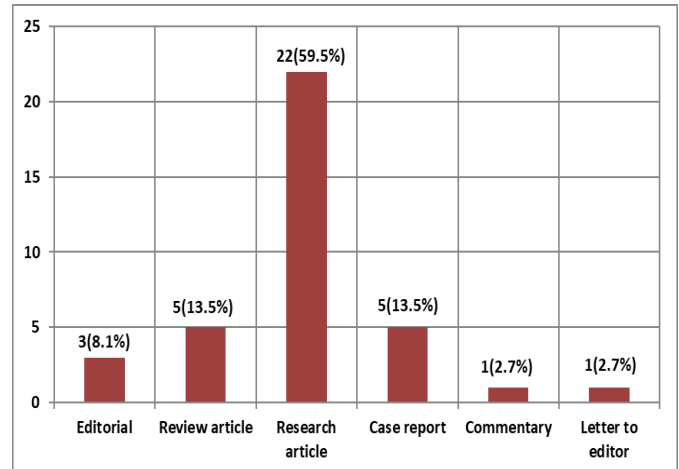


**Figure 2:** Line graph of KCMJ's article citations between the years 2020 and 2025.

Ideally, guaranteeing publishing diverse articles, recruiting editorials, guest editorials, original articles, review articles, systematic reviews and meta-analysis, brief communications/reports, case reports, conference proceedings, clinical case series, commentary, and letter to editor could foster higher readership and citations. Apart from editorials, original articles, and case reports, other types of articles are infrequently submitted to our journal. We are concerned that failure to follow diverse publication could curb an essential prerequisite set by Scopus. As a result, the KCMJ is honored to receive different types of articles. Regular annual conferences/meetings, whether local or international, hosted by Al-Kindy College of Medicine could provide KCMJ the opportunity to publish conference proceedings. In particular, publishing commentary and letter to editor type of articles are very disappointing as the journal published only one article (2.7%), for each, out of 37 articles in the year 2025 (Figure 3). Though this type of articles provokes insightful collaborative discussion and speeds mutual scientific communication, researchers' reluctance to handle it is embarrassing and it is thought to be related to low likelihood of becoming citable, and thus it might curb their scientific promotion and academic proficiency. One solution to encourage researchers to take part in this type of article is to make its publication free of charge.

In response to the heightening interest in conducting research in medicine and medical sciences following COVID-19 pandemic and climate changes, KCMJ has committed to create more opportunities for researchers to publish their work, contribute substantially to scientific advancement, and help disseminate valuable research to a wider audience at a brisk pace. Currently, KCMJ publishes 10-12 different articles per issue. Regarding the allowed number of articles that the journal could publish amid a substantially mounting number of submissions, the acceptance rate might proportionately reduce. Indeed, the acceptance rate is currently around 5%, which is comparable to that registered in highly distinguished scholastic journals. This restricted policy in nominating appropriate manuscripts is expected to give KCMJ editorial board the opportunity to publish

the best of what have been submitted and thus, it could make the journal scientifically more impactful.



**Figure 3:** Type and number/percent of published articles in KCMJ in the year 2025.

The editorial board of KCMJ should seriously discuss the decision to launch four issues per year. This decision exhibits manifold advantages. First, it provides the journal the flexibility to handle the rise in manuscripts submission secondary to growing local, regional, and global recognitions of the journal. Second, it favors building downloads, readership, citations, and H index. Third, it will significantly reduce the waiting list of articles for final publication. Fourth, it will provide raw material for publication audits and for scrutinizing the journal's scientific progress. Although there is a theoretical potential risk of lowering the journal's H index with increasing number of published articles and lowering citations, such risk could be truly obviated by judicious selection of appropriate manuscripts and rigorous reviewing process. Besides releasing four issues annually, regular launching and finishing the whole process from the manuscript's submission to final publication within four months as maximum whenever possible are solicited.

With advancement in modern communication technology, the world has currently transformed into a small village. It is much easier and feasible nowadays to build international collaboration with researchers in distinguished hospitals, institution, and academic communities and conduct joint works. Indeed, the KCMJ strongly encourages local researchers to collaboratively work with foreign researchers, and their joint works are always welcome since these works definitely enhance the scientific quality of articles, contribute significantly to the world medical literature, and foster further journal recognition and metrics.

In conclusion, we believe that the above-mentioned points could serve as an inspiration to draw a road map for the future journal's progress. As KCMJ continually moves forward, we sincerely thank readers, researchers, reviewers, Deanship of Al-Kindy College of Medicine, and Council of University of Baghdad for their trust, dedication, teamwork, passion, and meaningful contribution and we keep looking forward receiving their continuing support and help to

build the scientific sobriety, harvest new milestones, and embed the journal in the international map of the highly esteemed scholastic journals.

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest related to this work.

#### **Data availability**

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#### **Author Contributions**

The author performed the literature review, revised the manuscript, and approved the final version.

The author meets the ICMJE criteria for authorship and agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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