
EDITORIAL COMMENT

Comments on the Future of the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention (and Control) and the Asian Pacific Organization for Cancer Prevention (and Control)

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Abstract

In this follow-up I include one more letter and have made an attempt to make a list of concrete measures that the APOCP/UICC-ARO could undertake to ensure the future success of the APJCP in assisting the cancer researchers of the Asian-Pacific.

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Dear Sir

I am very proud to note that the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention (APJCP) is in its 10th year and its international profile is well established. During the past 10 years, it consistently published independent minded well written article that enrich the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the research in all areas of cancer. Reading through the articles of the back issues of APJCP has been an intellectual feast in cancer research. The APJCP is accessible on both Pub Med and Science Citation Index Expanded which is a great achievement within the 10 year period when we compare to other journals. The Emirates Medical Journal and Qatar Medical Journal have been struggling for 25 years and 15 years respectively to be indexed on Pub Med.

I appreciate the effective system of APJCP in reviewing the manuscripts and publishing the papers within short time. Manuscripts subjected to the APJCP are reviewed for its significance and originality. It is not just a passive idealistic journal, but it vigorously challenges researchers to submit better quality manuscripts on cancer. From my authoring experience with the peer reviewed journals and the remarkable achievement of the APOCP within the short time, I strongly recommend without any reservation that this journal should continue to support the Asian Pacific Cancer researches.

Furthermore, the activities of the APOCP have been expanded and it reached to a stage which needs its own infrastructure to ensure the continuation of the Journal. All scientists within the Asian Pacific Region who are actively involved in cancer research should think seriously to support this organization. Until now, it has been functioning with the support of UICC Japanese National Committee. Since its financial commitment is increasing, it is of my opinion that it should introduce institutional membership charges and subscription fees for financial security. I am sure that the 5th APOCP General Assembly Conference which will be held in Istanbul in April 2010 will help to pave a strong basement for the Asian Pacific Organization for Cancer Prevention and Control.

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Dear Members

To start, I would like to make one clarification. As far as I am concerned, since the APJCP became all electronic and there was no further rationale in collecting subscription fees from our Japanese and Korean membership, all of the scientists who are active in any area of cancer research within the geographical area covered by the Asian-Pacific, stretching from Turkey and Egypt in the west to Hawaii and the islands of the South Pacific in the east, are automatically members of the APOCP if they so desire (I would happily extend that to include South and Central America). There are no limitations on who can publish in the APJCP, assuming they are bona fide researchers, and all of the papers published,

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along with the Mini-Abstract booklets for each issue, can be freely downloaded from the website at www.apocp.org. The idea behind the APOCP and APJCP continues to be that financial constraints should be minimized wherever possible to allow contributions from individuals in all countries of the Asian Pacific. At the individual scientist level the idea of payments of small sums as membership fees (exceedingly difficult to collect) is therefore not under consideration at present.

The advent of pdf technology allows us the luxury of not having to publish hardcopy. The unavoidable costs are an office and staff to actually produce the journal. At present my salary is paid by the UICC-ARO, entirely covered by the Japanese National Committee. Spreading the financial load is the immediate concern. Taking into consideration the suggestions made by members, I would like to make the following proposals:

1) Assuming a relatively low institutional fee it might be possible to persuade many of the Research Institutes, Universities and Cancer Societies in the area to become members. Advantages and incentives, for example with help in publication, would need to be discussed. One feasible option is that many new members be recruited into the Asia Pacific Federation of Organizations for Cancer Control and that this then undertakes to support the APJCP. This will be discussed at the 20th Asian Pacific Cancer Congress in Tsukuba in November. Any concrete help in preparing for this would be appreciated.

2) It has been suggested that we impose some form of publication charge. My own personal feeling is that that this would detract from the philosophy behind the APOCP/APJCP and would have negative consequences. However, it can naturally be discussed.

3) The National Cancer Institutes/Centres across the region can be asked to support this collaborative effort. Since many Directors are attending a meeting in Beijing on the 23rd of October, there may be an opportunity to make a proposal and I will certainly try to do so at that time.

4) The WHO in Geneva and the Regional Offices for the Western Pacific, South-Eastern Asia, Eastern Mediterranean and Europe (for Central Asia) can be asked for some form of contribution. I have already visited WPRO in Manila and hope to visit SEARO in December and will ask representatives of each of the countries in the region for their support in approaching the various WHO offices.

5) Pharmaceutical and other industrial suppliers should be approached for revenue from advertising in the Mini-Abstracts pdf files. Anyone wishing to act to introduce the Editors to interested parties should contact me.

6) There should be some devolution of the editorial responsibilities. Therefore I propose that regional APJCP offices be set up for Western and Central Asia, South Asia, South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific and North-Eastern Asia (conceivably also Latin America). This should also facilitate improvement in the peer review system to ensure that the quality of the papers really adds to the 'impact' of the APJCP without necessarily putting too much emphasis on any 'impact factor' the journal might eventually achieve if included in the Science Citation Index.

7) Hold more regional meetings to generate funding has been suggested. However, it is my experience and feeling that we actual need to collect money in order to be able to fund meetings in the developing regions of the Asian Pacific and that this should be a major objective of the APOCP/UICC-ARO.

8) Approach philanthropic organizations in the region for their support and cooperation in achieving goals of mutual interest. Anyone wishing to act to introduce the Editors to interested parties should contact me.

9) Produce documents and materials of commercial interest which could be marketed to generate funding. For example books on health of general interest to the public could be scripted by expert members and translated into various languages with the APOCP/UICC-ARO or APFOCC logos.

I would be grateful if all the members could read these suggestions and make comments, improvements and any counterproposals of their own. We have two very good opportunities for discussion over the next six months, one at Tsukuba in November at the APCC and the other in Istanbul in April of next year at the 5th General Assembly Conference of the APOCP. Let us take full advantage of these venues and move the APJCP into a new phase - to a high impact in the broadest sense of the term - in its second decade.

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