

# UOJM editor training: results from the 2013 editor satisfaction survey and highlights from 2013-2014 training workshops

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## BACKGROUND

UOJM recognizes that editor competency and preparedness directly impacts the quality of peer review, which holds the key to producing a great publication. We believe that success of our journal is based on a central goal of promoting physician competency in medical communication and developing leaders in medicine. In the age of evidence-based medicine, there are surprisingly few, if at all, opportunities for medical trainees to gain formal training in scientific writing and critical appraisal. Over the last two years, the UOJM has aimed to address these gaps and worked on developing a training program to equip participants with these important skills. Indeed, the merits of involvement in a peer reviewed journal at this stage of medical/research training have been recognized by its trainee participants, and have been reviewed extensively by Kevin Lee [1]. Following the success of the 2013 issue, UOJM made considerable strides to further improve the quality of content in the journal. In 2012-2013, 30 students participated as reviewers on the editorial board and received a practical experience in peer reviewed research. We conducted a year-end survey to identify issues and areas for improving the editor experience.

## 2013 EDITOR SATISFACTION SURVEY

**Methodology:** An online questionnaire was delivered by email to 30 associate editors, section and copy editors in UOJM. Responses were collected anonymously using SurveyMonkey. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with UOJM activities and resources, to rank a list of items based on their potential for improving the UOJM and increasing chances of submission. A total of 16 out of 30 editors responded (53%), comprised of 3 associate editors, 11 section editors, and 2 copy editors. Editors were represented by students from undergraduate MD year 1-3, PhD, and MD/PhD classes (Table 1).

**Survey Results:** Overall, editors were most satisfied (average score > 3) with the time provided for review (3.56), the website (3.29), and the effectiveness of the training towards career goals (3.44) (Figure 1). Editors were least satisfied (average score < 3) with the workshop/training sessions (2.62), resources on how to review articles (2.67) and getting feedback from Managing Editors (2.79). When asked to choose from a list of choices for improving the UOJM, editors ranked peer review training work-

shops from faculty advisors (1st) and writing workshops (2nd) as the most important (Figure 2). Editors also responded strongly to PubMed/MEDLINE indexing and increased awareness of the journal as factors that would increase their likelihood of submitting to the UOJM. The results of this survey formed the basis for some of UOJM's training initiatives for the 2013-2014.

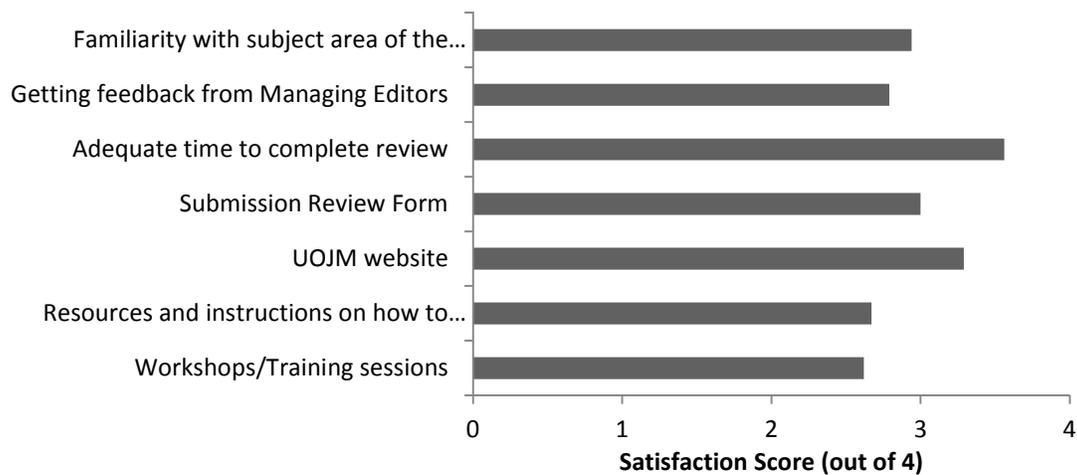
**Table 1.** Demographics of respondents from the 2012-2013 Editor Satisfaction Survey

	Medical (MD) student	Graduate (MSc) student	Graduate (PhD) student	MD/PhD Student	Total
Year 1	3	0	1	0	4
Year 2	6	0	0	2	8
Year 3	2	0	1	0	3
Year 4+	0	0	0	0	0

## UOJM'S RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

This year (2013-2014), over 45 students involved on the editorial board and journal staff participated in four training workshops hosted by UOJM, in contrast to one in 2013. These workshops were designed with the following goals in mind: to increase communication between UOJM senior editors to the editorial staff, to equip staff with critical appraisal strategies to conduct effective peer review, and to establish criteria for accepting articles. At the beginning of the year an introductory workshop was provided by the senior editors to provide a history of the journal, outline its goals, describe roles and responsibilities of each editorial board member and detail a publication timeline for the current cycle. In addition, concepts such as blinding in peer review and the merits of practicing peer review were emphasized. The presentation is available at the following link: <http://uojm.ca/about/editorial-board>. In November, UOJM's managing editor, Ghadi Antoun, held a peer review process seminar for the editorial team. This interactive session took editors through the process of critiquing and providing feedback using an example article. During this workshop, the learning objectives were to outline a strategy for standardized peer review using the UOJM submission form, discuss peer review etiquette, provide a demonstration of the

## Editorial



**Figure 1. Results from 2012-2013 Editor's Satisfaction Poll.** Editorial board members were asked to rate activities and resources provided by UOJM based on the following scale: 1 = poor, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = good, 4 = very good. The average score from 16 respondents for each parameter was recorded

electronic peer review platform, and to establish publication acceptance criteria. These steps were crucial in ensuring that the goals and visions of UOJM were effectively communicated to the editors.

Two additional workshops were offered for the staff of UOJM and made available to members of the Seminars in Medical Research and Technology (SMRT), a medical student interest group at the University of Ottawa. In an effort to bring in outside expertise, an informative and dynamic presentation on medical journal writing and editorial practices was given by Dr. Diane Kelsall, an editor at the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ). Dr. Kelsall gave the perspectives of editors and peer reviewers and provided constructive advice on how to maximize the chances of publication by emphasizing the importance of effective communication, clarity and presentation in writing manuscripts. The workshop was very well-received by attendees, and slides from her presentation are online: [University of Ottawa Medical Journal Workshop Feb 11, 2014](#). At the end of the 2013-2014 academic year, we held a career panel featuring Dr. Clare Liddy, Dr. Alireza Jalali and Dr. Phil Wells, who all shared their

research and career experiences. Dr. Liddy is an associate professor at the University of Ottawa's Department of Family Medicine with a cross-appointment to the Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine and discussed about her research with eConsultation, an innovative electronic referral system. The eConsultation system allows primary care providers to communicate with specialists through an online media, helping to optimize the referral system in Ontario. Additionally, Dr. Jalali, a distinguished anatomy professor at the University of Ottawa, engaged us with his presentation about the value of social media in medical education and community. Lastly, Dr. Wells, the Chief and Chair of the Department of Medicine at The Ottawa Hospital, described about his successful research in clinical epidemiology and thrombosis, as well as useful career advices for the medical students in the audience. Overall, the addition of the career panel and workshops throughout this academic year has enhanced UOJM's presence as a journal and a group for medical and graduate students to develop into future leading physicians and scientists.

**Table 2. Ranking of proposed recommendations for improving UOJM**

	None = 0	Possible = 1	Definite = 2	Cumulative score	n	Average score	Rank
Workshops/training sessions from faculty advisors	0	5	11	27	16	1.69	1
Writing workshop for authors looking to submit	1	9	6	21	16	1.31	2
More issues per academic year (eg. two issues for 2013-2014, biannual release)	5	8	3	14	16	0.875	5
Student-organized seminars and/or a journal club	2	9	5	19	16	1.19	4
Awards for best abstract/article	2	8	6	20	16	1.25	3

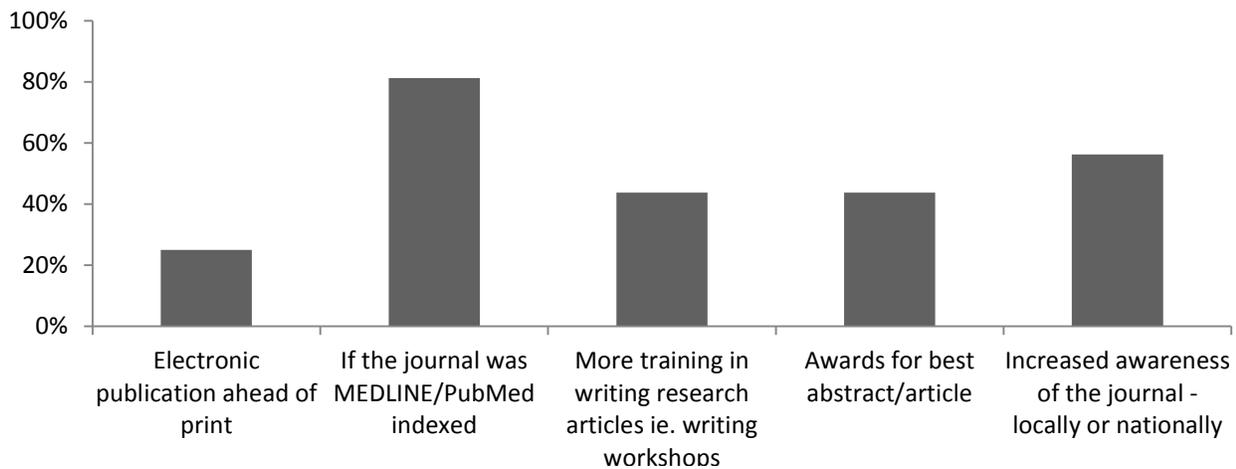


Figure 2. Editor's opinions on factors influencing the likelihood of submitting to UOJM.

## OUTLOOK

After our first successful year of implementing training workshops, we are looking forward to receiving feedback from these pilot workshops as we refine our training program for future years. Amidst the continued growth of the UOJM since its relaunch it is important to recognize UOJM's identity. UOJM is defined by the collective talents of students within the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa. Students need to cultivate this high level of medical research talent, and we hope that UOJM can continue to provide opportunities to practice scientific inquiry and critical appraisal for years to come.

## REFERENCES

1. Lee, K. The unsung value of local peer-reviewed publications. University of Ottawa Journal of Medicine 2013; 3(1):17-18

**Keywords:** Editor training, peer review, medical education, critical appraisal, editorial, medical journal