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## Developing a culture towards medical journalism

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To the Editor Biomedica,

Today, I will not be discussing a recently published paper as how traditional letter to the editor is based on but will comment on the news clips that I have read with great interest that your office has launched certificate courses in medical editing in your prestigious institute in the year 2019.<sup>1</sup> More recently, you have launched an advanced level course for medical editors that may also be upgraded to additional credits as a diploma program.<sup>2</sup> I must congratulate the administration and facilitators of the program for their innovative thinking and launching novel ideas through University's platform. While journalism has blossomed in this country, a communication gap or link has always existed between medical doctors and medical writers as journalist in our country. This has led to a generation of reporters that have emerged as health journalists in Pakistan without appropriate qualification or experience in medical practice. In addition, many medical-related discoveries and successful surgical interventions carried out by expert Pakistani doctors have been published in print media, but the transformation of such successes into the health-care system or its amalgam into the medical practice is hardly seen due to a lack of connecting of clinicians, policymakers, and health media. By this, I specifically refer to those success stories that are reported as brief 4-5 liner news updates in the print media, but their actual translation into medical research and dissemination into the community for health-related benefits is not achieved. Furthermore, the print and electronic media have failed to develop a positive impact of our health system on the general public because of the continuous jargon of the media over the overburdened healthcare system. Resultantly, the common man is no longer interested to hear

or focusing on such news; hence, a large communication gap exists. Thus, this initiative by the University of Health Sciences Lahore, through your Editorial office, can sow the seeds to encouraging clinicians to pick up their pens, not just to publish research papers, but to write stories of their own system for the masses while submitting their expert opinions regarding myths and fables about social taboos such as mental illnesses, sexually-transmitted disease such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome and risks associated with vaccination campaigns. This platform may also be utilized to generate empathy and humanist approach toward the marginalized population such as victims of sexual assaults and acid attacks etc.

The dynamics of the transfer of information has changed dramatically since the launch of social media platforms, which is now one of the most powerful tools for information transfer. It is need of the hour to encourage clinicians to write regularly in all forums of information transfer; launching their you-tube channels, writing blogs, or making pages and groups on social media apps to discuss issues and advances related to our local context. I would also suggest to you that while almost all medical universities are focusing on launching multiple medical journals, the launch or visibility of University's magazine is extremely slow. Almost none of the medical universities in Pakistan publish their weekly or bi-monthly newspapers that may provide their students, staff, and faculty with the opportunity to write as journalist, poets, authors or artists, etc. Some institutes do publish newsletters that are full of the highlights of University's own performance but do not ignite the creative, social or psychological insight thus failing to voice the motivations, dreams, and achievements of young and old clinicians. Maybe it is the high time that we overcome this hiccup

and transform the health sector by inculcating a culture of medical journalism through connecting the voices and stories of students, faculty, staff and the community.

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**SG:** Conception, acquisition of data, drafting of manuscript and approval of the final version of the manuscript to be published.

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