FOREWORD

OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP HELD AND ESTABLISHING OF THE MACEDONIAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EDITORS, in Skopje, on April 25, 2014

In the last 20 years high schooling/university level education in the Republic of Macedonia has been enriched with a number of additional public and private universities, faculties and high schools established in all areas of education including biomedical sciences. Many young people got opportunity to study and continue with further postgraduate training including specializations and sub-specializations, masters/MS and doctorates/PhD studies. The expansion of higher education and in particular the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System in R. Macedonia, about 10 years ago, contributed to the decline of the criteria in the study, with increased easier passing from one academic year to another and easier way of obtaining higher education diplomas, even the so-called "buying diplomas", especially at some private universities. There were registered numerous frauds in passing written tests of colloquia and exams, plagiarism and other forms of unethical conduct in drafting seminar papers, master thesis and doctoral dissertations, both in undergraduate and postgraduate education that the academic community could not accept and could not tolerate.

On the other hand, the introduction of additional and higher criteria in the academic community for career development and election into educational and scientific titles, as well as for granting various other recognitions and awards, according to the research activities and the number of published papers in scientific journals, contributed to an expansion of the publishing activity in biomedicine, with an increasing number of scientific journals in R. Macedonia and the number of papers published in them, in most cases with a previous peer review. But, the increased quantity has not always been matched by increased quality in publishing. The reasons for this are related to lack of information and education of the scientific community, especially of the young scientists about the ethical principles in research and publishing, and a number of attempts of many experts for increasing their scientific productivity by unethical behavior and fraud in research and publishing their results in scientific journals.

The measures undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Science, the editors of scientific journals and other relevant factors are mainly aimed at detecting fraud and plagiarism. Little attention has been paid to the additional structured education to raise the ethical standards and awareness about the principles of scientific communication and ethical approach to research and publishing of results in scientific journals.

After prolonged observations of adverse trends and developments in the field of scientific publishing in biomedicine, the guest editors of this thematic issue of the Journal "PRILOZI/ Contributions", along with members of the Department of Medicine and other members of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MASA), in 2013, undertook the initiative to organize a workshop for editors of scientific journals, on research and publishing integrity and misconduct in Skopje. The first meeting of the Initiative Board was held on 01.11.2013, in MASA, Skopje. It was announced that two internationally-renowned experts in the field expressed willingness to participate as presenters at the workshop: Prof. Dr. Ana Marusic, Medical Faculty, University of Split, Chief co-editor of the Journal of Global Health (www.jogh.org); and Prof. Elizabeth Wager, Managing Director of Sideview-International Publications Consultancy (www.lizwager.com), Brucks, United Kingdom. The initiative and proposal for organizing Workshop was supported by the Department of Medicine and Presidency of MASA.
At this first meeting, the Initiative Board was transformed into Organizing Committee of the Workshop for editors of scientific journals in biomedicine, with Acad. Momir Polenakovic as its President and increased number of 13 members (Available at: http://www.manu.edu.mk/2014Events/Rabotilnica_ICGIB/WorkShopProgram.pdf).

Later on two meetings of the Organizing Committee were held, together with the potential presenters at the workshop, in MASA, on 3 and 22 of April, 2014, in order to agree on the program and to plan other organizational and operational aspects of the workshop, scheduled to be held on April 25, 2014. During these meetings several conclusions were adopted and implemented, including:

1. The need and interest to organize a workshop for editors of scientific journals in biomedicine in R. Macedonia was highly recognized, in MASA and beyond, in order to improve the editorial policies and publishing integrity, as well as raising the level and quality of scientific journals and published papers in them. Therefore MASA expressed interest and willingness to retake the leading role, to be the organizer and host of such a workshop as the first step towards the possible organization of a broader international conference on research and publishing integrity and misconduct;

2. Invitations for the morning lectures to be sent to all interested parties i.e. universities and faculties in the area of biomedicine in R. Macedonia, health and other relevant institutions and associations and chambers, as well as students enrolled at master's and doctoral studies at relevant faculties in biomedical field in R. Macedonia;

3. Invitations for the afternoon workshop for editors of scientific journals in biomedicine, with selective approach, to be sent to all editors-in-chief and members of editorial boards of scientific journals in R. Macedonia;

4. Invitations for the morning lectures and the afternoon workshop to be sent to the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health of R. Macedonia, and to all relevant universities and faculties/ departments;

5. Publishing integrity and quality of published articles in scientific journals in biomedicine is closely linked to the conditions and support to the scientific research in R. Macedonia in general, funding of scientific research projects, financial support for researchers to present the results to international professional conferences and for publishing scientific papers in journals with impact factor (IF). All scientific journals in biomedicine in R. Macedonia should tend to reach higher qualitative level and IF, providing support and subsidies to promote the editorial and publishing practices of journals through Open Journal System, Versita and other electronic systems for on-line submission of manuscripts, confirming authorship, managing the process of peer review, editing and publishing:

6. After the workshop, the participants-lecturers to be asked to prepare and submit manuscripts upon their presentations, according to the instructions for authors, in order to prepare a thematic issue of the MASA Journal "Prilozi/Contributions, entitled "Publishing Integrity and Good Practices in Editing";

7. Workshop participants to establish Macedonian Association of Medical Editors (MAME), an NGO, which will coordinate further activities for dissemination of information and exchange of experiences in editorial policy and publishing practices, new knowledge and international standards for scientific and publishing ethics and integrity, and continuous education of the scientific community in R. Macedonia, in cooperation with relevant ministries, universities and faculties, professional associations and chambers. Meanwhile the concept was upgraded and a Proposal-Statute of the Association was prepared, which was expected to be adopted on April 25, 2014, at the end of the workshop for editors, by the participants as members of the constituent assembly of MAME.

Workshop for editors of scientific journals in biomedicine, entitled "Publishing integrity and good practices in editing", was held on April 25, 2014, from 2 – 6 p.m., after previously delivered two lectures by the invited speakers in the morning session, from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. The order of the topics and presenters is shown in the Workshop Programme available at: http://www.manu.edu.mk/2014Events/Rabotilnica_ICGIB/WorkShopProgram.pdf

Constituent Assembly of MAME was held in MASA – Skopje, on April 25, 2014, starting
at 6.00 pm, in the continuity of the workshop. The meeting was attended by more than 30 members, and coordinated by the working Presidency of three members: Acad. Momir Polenakovic, Acad. Nada Pop-Jordanova and Prof. Doncho Donev.

The meeting was opened and led by Acad. Momir Polenakovic, who initially welcomed the participants and expressed his satisfaction with the preparatory activities for organizing the Founding Assembly for establishment of the MAME. Further explanations about the initiative and the meetings of the Initiative and Organizing Boards, the Proposal-Statute and other documents and proposals for appointment of the President and other officials and members of the Association in the bodies were given by Acad. Pop-Jordanova and Prof. Donev.

With voting of the present members unanimously were adopted the following decisions:
1) Decision to establish the Macedonian Association of Medical Editors (MAME);
2) Decision on adoption of the Statute of MAME;
3) Decision to elect the President and members of the bodies of MAME:

Members/functions of the Executive Board of MAME:

President and representative by law of MAME: Acad. Momir Polenakovic

President Elect: Acad. Nada Pop-Jordanova

Vice presidents (three, in total, which will be coordinators of the three commissions):
1. Prof. Aziz Polozhani; 2. Prof. Mirko Spiroski; 3. Prof. Goce Spasovski

Organizational/General Secretary: Prof. Doncho Donev

Treasurer: Assist. Prof. Silvana Markovska

Registrar/Administrative Secretary: Mrs. Blagica Trenchevska

Members of the Supervisory Board:

Coordinators and members of the commissions:
(i) Commission for Planning and Evaluation:


Honorary-special members (councilors):
1. Prof. Ana Marusic, Split, Croatia; and 2. Prof. Elizabeth Wager, Bucks, Great Britain;
4) Decision to adopt annual Action Programme of MAME.

At the end of the meeting some explanation for the next steps in the procedure for registration of MAME in the Central Register of R. Macedonia were given, and other start-up activities for functioning of MAME as a legal entity.

We hope that, from the enclosed papers in this thematic issue, readers will get clear impression of the situation regarding the level of publishing integrity and ethics in the scientific publishing activity in R. Macedonia, and what steps are to be taken to change the unfavorable aspects related to this issue. Also, we believe that readers will become aware of the contribution of the Workshop held and the perspectives of MAME aimed at improving the publishing integrity and good practices in editing.

We express our thankfulness to all stakeholders and actors for their support and participation in the activities for organization and realization of the Workshop, as well as the establishment of the Macedonian Association of Medical Editors and for the contribution of all authors in preparation of manuscripts for this thematic issue of the journal "Prilozi Contributions", with identical title with the theme of the workshop "Publishing Integrity and Good Practices in Editing".

Guest editors:

Acad. Momir Polenakovic

Prof. Dr. Doncho Donev
Participants to the workshop “Publishing Integrity and Good Practices in Editing” and the first members of the Macedonian Association of Medical Editors, April 25, 2014