

Past, Present and Future of ASEAN Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine

In 2019, the Journal of Thai Rehabilitation Medicine changed its name to the ASEAN Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine (ASEAN J Rehabil Med). In line with the change of name, representatives from Malaysia and Indonesia, were invited to join the Editorial Board. The aim and scope of the journal are “to promote improvement of science and education in the field of rehabilitation medicine as well as medical rehabilitation service, system and policy in ASEAN countries.” This is of paramount importance as research and publication are key to scientific progress and serve as foundation to creating strong academic culture. The ASEAN J Rehabil Med publishes original articles, short communications, case reports, review articles, and special articles related to rehabilitation medicine including education, services, system, policy, and innovation which would benefit not only rehabilitation professionals but also their patients/consumers especially persons with disability. The journal has no publication charge and the online version is freely accessible through the journal website (<https://www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/aseanjrm/>).

The year 2019 was the transition year and there was considerable effort spent on redefining the scope and organization of this new journal. We are proud to announce that in the year 2020, the journal successfully published three issues (total of 20 articles), all in English. Two-third were original articles while the rest was on innovation related to medical rehabilitation. The first issue for year 2021 is published in February, two months ahead of schedule. The range of contributors and types of articles submitted to the journal shows changing landscape, which is a positive indication of growth. Although the main contributors were from Thailand, contributors from other countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are slowly trickling in. Whilst majority of the authors were PMR trainees, who need to do research as part of their program requirement, experience rehabilitation physicians and rehabilitation professionals such as physical therapists are beginning to explore the opportunity to publish in this journal. We do hope that there will be more articles from other ASEAN countries and professions to which reflect diversity in geographical distribution of authors.

Our peer-review process is rigorous to uphold the quality and validity of each submitted articles. Each submitted manuscript will be blinded and reviewed by two reviewers, one from our editorial board and the other is an expert from different institutes. Generally, the process of peer-review process is about a month; most of the reviewers were able to complete the reviews on time. Reviewers' comments have been very helpful and made the revised manuscripts better in quality and readability. In the year 2020, out of the 22 reviewers, three were non-Thais (1 Indonesian and 2 Malaysian). We seek to diversify the reviewers in the future. Average duration from submission to acceptance decreased from 4 months in 2019 to 3 months in 2020. Unfortunately, there were few manuscripts rejected in 2020 because they did not fit the scope of the journal and not written in English. To improve clarity, readability and quality of publication, we have revised the journal templates, one for original article and one for case report, and criteria for review for original article and for case report. We hope that authors will follow the new templates and peer-reviewers will use the new criteria for review, and these are expected to shorten the peer-review process and facilitate the revision and the publication processes.

The free online access would promote citation of articles published in the journal. Currently the journal is in Tier 1 of the Thai Citation Index (TCI) and also in the ASEAN citation index (ACI). If rehabilitation physicians and professionals in ASEAN submit their quality research papers to the journal, and these articles can be cited by other journals in international citation index such as Scopus and PubMed. The journal aims to be a regional and international journal in medical rehabilitation in the next 3-5 years. Together we urge the ASEAN rehabilitation community to join us in this valuable journey.

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