

## Editorial 2

### Tokyo Declaration: one step ahead to research and publication integrity in Asia Pacific region

In the early days of August 2013, four editors from Medical Journal of Indonesia attended Asia Pacific Association of Medical Editors (APAME) Convention 2013 at the Komagome District, Tokyo, Japan. This important meeting was held by Japanese Association of Medical Journal Editors (JAMJE) and supported by Japan Medical Association. At least, 20 countries from SEAR (Southeast Asia Region) and WPR (Western Pacific Region) came to the meeting. At this convention, we attended both (SEAR and WPR) and also APAME meeting itself. Many programs, agreements, and plans were made in the meeting room.

While in 2011, the meeting in Singapore produced declaration on equitable access to health information, and 2012 meeting in Kuala Lumpur sounded promotion of scholarly writing skills and its standards, this year, I can say is the year of ethics and integrity. This is not by chance that the meeting finally declared about equitable and ethical publication in science and medicine. Japan, not only famous by abundant excellent researchers, scientists, and authors of many international-quality publication, but also popular in academic tragedies, research scandals, and frauds. There are numerous Japanese-authored-papers that have been retracted from international journals. These events positioned Japan one of the highest retracted-papers-country in the world.

Fraud is a big problem in science and medicine. Fabrication, falsification, duplication, plagiarism, and salamy publication was several things which can downgraded the true report in (bio)medicine. Especially in our daily work and practice, fraud can lead to error in clinical decisions (etiologic, diagnostic, therapeutic, and prognostic) and also wrong and un-evidence-based health policies. No intention to become

over-reactive, this situation can be dangerous to clinical and public health recommendation. But, until now, there are no law to punish many fraud-researchers and authors. In Japan, social punishment be the scariest punishment for them. In Indonesia? I think there must be more frighten consequences for fraud players in this country.

This Tokyo Declaration, reminds me of one of my epidemiology class four years ago which is named "Ethics in Epidemiology". It is clearly stated that ethical research will drive ethical publication, while fraud research lead to fraud publication. So, all must be started with the **honesty research**. No one have a right to fraud data lead to his/her hypothesizes. In all point of view, it is wrong. Research must be done with the art of honesty and integrity. Ethics committees, senior researchers in the institution, and peer groups should be the one who know if there are misconducts in the research, and journal editors have a big role before it is published. However, sometimes editors cannot be blamed because the fraud is very blur and suspicious does not appear at that time. Well, retraction will happen later, like most scandals in academics through out decades.

All medical faculties, hospitals, and research centers must have their own ethics committees. The committee gives us norms and standards for doing researches, especially in human (clinical research), animals, and cells. But, committee is just an organization. The honesty and ethical standards must be started in the mind of all researchers and academicians. It is a hard job to set up research and publication integrity. It is more like culture and tradition. We all are responsible for this task.

High quality information stated in the declaration included ethics from the beginning of the research, sampling, analysing, compiling data and references, and publishing. We are committed also to set ethical standards for our colleagues, editors, researchers, students, and librarians. Writing and publishing papers are a task of dignity. But, it is more clear if I say that research and publication is now not only work of academic and science, but also a work of art, humanity, and integrity.

#### Tokyo Declaration on Research Integrity and Ethical Publication in Science and Medicine in the Asia Pacific Region

We, the participants in the Joint Meeting of the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME), the Index Medicus for the South-East Asian Region (IMSEAR) and the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM) held in Tokyo from 2 to 4 August 2013:

##### CONSIDERING

That overwhelming data in science and medicine may differ in their reliability and the quality control is important for compiling scientific and health information;

Continued...

That equitable circulation of scientific and health information is facilitated by fair collaboration among policy makers, researchers, and industry sectors including pharmaceuticals and publishers;

That APAME, IMSEAR, and WPRIM are important collaborative initiatives that can implement the global guidelines for publication and dissemination of scientific and medical knowledge in an equitable and ethical manner;

### **CONFIRM**

Our commitment to endorse that scientific and medical knowledge is imperishable and should not be assessed or evaluated by only economic or temporal considerations;

Our commitment to improve quality and reliability of scientific and medical knowledge through the IMSEAR and WPRIM;

Our commitment to publish reliable and high quality information by education of researchers, implementation of fair review processes, and organization of networks through the APAME;

Our commitment to collaborate with publishers, academic or public libraries, and research bodies to achieve equitable and ethical publication and dissemination of scientific and medical knowledge;

### **COMMIT**

Ourselves, to publishing reliable and high-quality information, thereby setting the ethical standard for our colleagues, editors, and librarians in the Region;

Our publishers, to disseminate scientific and medical knowledge fairly and impartially through digital library services including, but not limited to, IMSEAR, WPRIM, and Global Health Library;

Our organization, APAME, to build further networks, convening conferences, and organizing events to educate and empower editors, peer reviewers, and authors to achieve internationally acceptable, but regionally realistic, scholarly standards.

4 August 2013, Tokyo.

*This declaration was launched at the 2013 Convention of the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME) held in Tokyo from 2-4 August 2013.*

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