

# A Four - Year analysis of manuscripts submitted for publication in West African Journal of Medicine (June 2001 to May 2005) (A brief report)

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## Summary

There are various criteria that could be used to rate a tertiary institution. One of these is the productivity of the members of staff which is shown by the research conducted, publications submitted and manuscripts published in indexed journals.

Manuscripts submitted and published in one of the highly rated indexed journals in our locality were analysed with a view to identifying how the institutions add to knowledge by their contributions. Our findings show that the four top-rated institutions in terms of manuscripts published in West African Journal of Medicine (WAJM) are University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UIITH), Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital (OAUTH), and Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH)

**Key-words:** *Manuscripts, Analysis, West African Journal of Medicine, Tertiary Institutions, Rating.*

## Résumé

Il y a des critères divers qu'on pourrait utiliser afin de classer une institution tertiaire. L'un d'eux est la productivité des membres de personnel qui est indiqué par la recherche effectuée, publication soumise et les manuscrits publiés dans les journaux répertoriés. Les manuscrits soumis et publiés dans l'un des journaux répertoriés fortement classés dans notre milieu ont été analysés afin d'identifier comment les institutions apportent grand choses à la connaissance à travers leurs contributions.

Nos résultats montrent que les quatre institutions hautement classées du point de vue des manuscrits publiés dans le Journal Ouest Africain des Médecine (JOAM) sont Collège hospitalier universitaire, Ibadan (CHU), centre hospitalier universitaire d'Ilorin (CHUI), centre hospitalier universitaire d'Obafemi Awolowo (CHUOA) et centre hospitalier universitaire de Jos (CHUJ)

## Introduction

Many tertiary institutions are now springing-up in developing countries. Because of this, various attempts have been made to assess the academic standard of the institutions. The academic contributions to knowledge and therefore relevance to the society of a tertiary institution is directly related to the productivity of the members of the staff. The academic productivity of the staff of an institution can be measured by the research conducted by them and accepted and published manuscripts by the staff. With this in mind, the academic status of an institution, to some

extent, can be graded by the number and nature of manuscripts published from such institution.

*West African Journal of Medicine* (WAJM) is published by the West African College of Physicians and the West African College of Surgeons constituents of the West African Postgraduate Medical College, a specialized agency of The West African Health Community<sup>1</sup>. This journal was ranked third among all the medical journals published and assessed in the whole of Africa in 2004, from 4171 e-mail alerts signed from March to the end of June 2004<sup>2</sup>

Even though this is not the only journal published here, it is felt that because this journal is highly rated, indexed by at least two international highly reputed indexers and because of ease of access as opposed to overseas journals, most authors will seek to publish in the journal as their first choice.

The numbers of manuscripts published in this journal by an institution can assist in the overall evaluation of tertiary health care related institutions in Nigeria. The purpose of this paper is to inform on top four institutions in terms of manuscripts published in this journal.

## Materials and method

All the manuscripts submitted to and accepted for publication in *WAJM* from June 2001 to May 2005 were collated and grouped according to yearly submissions. The submissions from the top ten institutions in Nigeria were noted as well as the top ten accepted manuscripts. Articles from outside Nigeria were excluded from this study. Also, the specialties of the submitted and accepted manuscripts were noted.

## Results

There were 16 issues of the journal considered during this 4-year period with a total of 1047 submitted articles. Out of these 399(38.1%) were accepted for publications. (see Table I for details). University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan submitted the greatest number of manuscripts during this period, followed by Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital (OAUTH) Ile-Ife and University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UIITH) Ilorin (see Table 2).

Countries from where some authors submitted manuscripts to this journal during the 4-year period but not considered for this analysis are U.S.A., Malawi, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Italy, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Gabon, Bulgaria, Denmark, New Mexico, Sierra Leone, South Africa, The Gambia, India, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Turkey, Brazil and United Arab Emirates.

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**Table 1** A 4-Year analysis of publications intended for WAJM (June 2001 - May 2005) (Ajao et al)

	June-May 01/02	June-May 02/03	June - May 03/04	June - May 04/05
Total manuscripts submitted	196	270	293	288
Total manuscripts accepted	94	101	111	93
Total manuscripts submitted outside Africa	12	24	34	25
Total manuscripts accepted outside Africa	9	15	16	16
Institution with highest manuscripts submission	UCH, Ibadan 67	UCH, Ibadan 55	UCH, Ibadan 63	UCH Ibadan 43
Institution with highest manuscripts acceptance	UCH, Ibadan 39	UCH, Ibadan 28	UCH, Ibadan 36	UCH, Ibadan 14
Specialty with highest submission	Ortho 22	O&G 31	O&G 34	Gen Surgery 38
Specialty with highest acceptance	Ortho 13	O&G 10	ENT 11	Gen Surgery 12

Key:

Ortho = Orthopaedics; O&G = Obstetrics and Gynaecology; ENT = Ear, Nose and Throat Surgery and Gen Surg = General Surgery

**Table 2** The first 10 institutions with the greatest number of submissions to WAJM (June 2001-May 2005)

June 2001 - May 2002 (% Yearly total)	June 2002 - May 2003 (% Yearly total)	June 2003 - May 2004 (% Yearly total)	June 2004 - May 2005 (% Yearly total)
UCH, Ibadan (34.1%)	UCH, Ibadan (20.4%)	UCH, Ibadan (21.5%)	UCH, Ibadan (14.9%)
OAUTH, Ile-Ife (8.7%)	UITH, Ilorin (8.9%)	OAUTH, Ile-Ife (8.9%)	UITH, Ilorin (8.0%)
UITH, Ilorin (8.7%)	OAUTH, Ile-Ife (6.3%)	UITH, Ilorin (8.2%)	OAUTH, Ile-Ife (6.25%)
OOUTH, Sagamu (6.1%)	OOUTH, Sagamu (4.4%)	UNTH, Enugu (4.4%)	LUTH, Lagos (5.9%)
ABUTH, Zaria (4.1%)	LAUTECH, Osogbo (4.4%)	OOUTH, Sagamu (4.1%)	UNTH, Enugu (5.2%)
JUTH, Jos (4.1%)	LUTH, Lagos (3.7%)	LAUTECH, Osogbo (4.1%)	JUTH, Jos (4.9%)
NAUTH, Nnewi (3.6%)	NAUTH, Nnewi (3.7%)	UBTH, Benin City (3.4%)	UBTH, Benin City (4.2%)
UPTH, Port Harcourt (3.6%)	UBTH, Benin City (2.6%)	JUTH, Jos (3.1%)	LAUTECH, Osogbo (3.8%)
UNTH, Enugu (2.6%)	ABUTH, Zaria (2.2%)	LUTH, Lagos (3.1%)	OOUTH, Sagamu (2.8%)
UDUTH, Sokoto (1.5%)	UDFUTH, Sokoto (2.2%)	NAUTH, Nnewi (2.4%)	NAUTH, Nnewi (2.4%)
LUTH, Lagos (1.5%)	AKTH, Kano 2.2%	UPTH, Port Harcourt (2.4%)	UPTH, Port Harcourt (2.4%)
Others (21.4)	Others 39.0	Others 34.4	Others 39.2

Table 3 The first 10 institutions with the greatest number of accepted manuscripts in WAJM (June 2001-May 2005)

June 2001 - May 2002 (% Yearly total)	June 2002 - May 2003 (% Yearly total)	June 2003 - May 2004 (% Yearly total)	June 2004 - May 2005 (% Yearly total)
UCH, Ibadan (41.4%)	UCH, Ibadan (27.7%)	UCH, Ibadan (32.4%)	UCH, Ibadan (15.1%)
UITH, Ilorin (12.7%)	UITH, Ilorin (10.85%)	OAUTH, Ile-Ife (9.0%)	JUTH, Jos (8.6%)
OAUTH, Ile-Ife (5.3%)	OAUTH, Ile-Ife (6.9%)	UITH, Ilorin (5.4%)	UITH, Ilorin (7.5%)
JUTH, Jos (4.2%)	LAUTECH, Osogbo (5.6%)	LUTH, Lagos (4.5%)	OAUTH, Ile-Ife (6.5%)
UPTH, Port Harcourt (4.2%)	LUTH, Lagos (2.0%)	LAUTECH, Osogbo (4.5%)	LAUTECH, Osogbo (5.4%)
OOUTH, Sagamu (3.2%)	OOUTH, Sagamu (2.0%)	UNTH, Enugu (2.7%)	UNTH, Enugu (3.2%)
NAUTH, Nnewi (2.1%)	AKTH, Kano (2.0%)	OOUTH, Sagamu (2.7%)	UPTH, Port Harcourt (3.2%)
	UBTH, Benin City (2.0%)	UBTH, Benin City (2.7%)	NAUTH, Nnewi (2.2%)
		JUTH, Jos (1.8%)	LUTH, Lagos (2.2%)
		UDUTH, Sokoto (1.8%)	

UCH = University College Hospital; UITH = University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital; OAUTH = Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital JUTH = Jos University Teaching Hospital; UPTH = University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital OOUTH = Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital NAUTH = Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital LAUTECH = Ladoke Akintola University of Technology LUTH = Lagos University Teaching Hospital AKTH = Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital; UBTH = University of Benin Teaching Hospital; UNTH = University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital UDUTH = Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital ABUTH = Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital

In the year 2001/2002 total manuscripts received were 196 from 31 institutions. Out of these manuscripts 94(40%) were accepted. Six institutions (19.5%) were from outside Nigeria.

In the year 2002/2003, total manuscripts received were 270 from 61 institutions. Out of these manuscripts 101 (37.4%) were accepted. Fifteen institutions (24.6%) were from outside Nigeria.

In the year 2003/2004, total manuscripts received were 293 from 44 institutions. Out of these manuscripts 111(37.9%) were accepted. Fourteen institutions (31.8%) were from outside Nigeria.

In the year 2004/2005, total manuscripts received were 288 from 62 institutions. Out of these manuscripts 93(32.3%) were accepted. Sixteen institutions (25.8%) were from outside Nigeria.

Institution with most accepted manuscripts was UCH, Ibadan, followed by UITH, Ilorin, OAUTH Ile-Ife and Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) (see tables 1 & 3)

The yearly highest submissions and accepted manuscripts by the various disciplines are shown in Table 1.

## Discussion

The rating of tertiary institutions in a locality depends on the criteria considered for such exercise. On the basis of our criterion, which is articles published by tertiary institutions in a highly rated, internationally known and indexed journal like WAJM, UCH, Ibadan is rated highest in academic output, followed by OAUTH, Ile-Ife, UITH, Ilorin and JUTH, Jos. This however does not agree with the National Universities Commission (NUC) rating because different criteria were used, some of these criteria are: ratio of teachers to students, infrastructure of the institutions etc. But in the world ranking for universities conducted in November 2005, no University in Nigeria was among the first 6,000 in ranking, but University of Ibadan (UI) ranked 6,304, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) ranked 6,645, University of Benin (UNIBEN) 6,769, University of Lagos (UNILAG) 7,181 and University of Jos (UNIJOS) 7,369. This world assessment of the Universities shows some similarity with the findings in this study (see table 3) in terms of relative positions to one another.

We do realize that this analysis has some weaknesses because it considered only one journal and one criterion.

Also one can claim that the proximity to the Editorial Secretariat and therefore the geographical advantages of the top four institutions may play a part in the submission of manuscripts<sup>4</sup>. But it certainly played no part in the manuscripts acceptance since the assessors did not know the authors of the manuscripts and the institutions where the manuscripts emanated from because the journal has a policy of "blinding" the assessors. In any case there are about four or five institutions that did not make the list and yet are as close to the Editorial Secretariat as the three out of the four that made the list.

Also, it may be argued that probably manuscripts are being preferentially submitted to other journals with different rates of acceptance and rejection<sup>5</sup>. But that is not within the scope of this analysis, since those data are not available for this analysis.

However in spite of all these one cannot totally dismiss the findings here as irrelevant or of little or no validity.

Publishing in peer-reviewed journals has undergone a great metamorphosis since the time after the Renaissance when scientists first started exchanging letters about their work until what it is today<sup>6-7</sup>. Even though the primary objective of medical journal is to disseminate information for the sake of improving patients' care it seems as if the main objective now for publishing is more for promotion than for disseminating information<sup>10</sup> "Publish or perish" and "numbers' game" are expressions often found among the academics that testify to this. All these lead to the proliferation of ephemeral journals that surface only for a certain purpose and then no longer exist once the purpose for such journals has been satisfied. This is one foremost reason why manuscripts in non-indexed journals should not be rated or regarded highly.

### Conclusion

The rating obtained from this analysis no doubt contributes to other criteria that may be used to rate tertiary institutions.

### Author contributions

Study Conception and design: Ajao, Lawoyin, Ugwu, Komolafe, Iginla

Acquisition of data: Komolafe, Ajao, Iginla

Analyses and interpretation of data: Lawoyin, Ajao, Ugwu

Drafting of manuscript: Ajao, Lawoyin

Critical revision: Ugwu, Komolafe, Iginla

Statistical expertise: Lawoyin

Supervision: Ajao, Lawoyin, Ugwu

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