

Editorial:

The birth of the International Journal of Human and Health Sciences (IJHHS)

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Thirty six years ago, a group of doctors from 10 countries met in Orlando USA to set up the Federation of Islamic Medical Associations (FIMA). From a humble origin, this Federation now has 50 full and associate members from 46 countries stretching from North America in the west to Australasia in the east. Membership comprises of national Islamic Medical Associations (IMAs), Humanitarian and Charitable Non-Governmental Associations, expert societies and health care providers across the globe. One of the earliest international projects of FIMA was Humanitarian and Relief work (FIMA Relief) launched in 1994, which received international recognition from among others, the American College of Physician's Richard Hinda Rosenthal Award. FIMA has since been acknowledged as a network partner with special consultative status to major international bodies including the United Nation (ECOSOC, New York), the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC Jeddah), Islamic Council on Daawa and Relief (IICDR, Cairo), World Health Organisation (WHO-East Mediterranean Regional Office, Cairo) and the Islamic Organisation of Medical Sciences (IOMS, Kuwait).

Knowledge acquisition and generation has always been central to FIMA's *raison d'être* considering the plethora of academics within FIMA's fraternity. The commitment towards academic excellence was highlighted when FIMA launched its Consortium of Islamic Medical Colleges (CIMCO) in the year 2000. The main objectives of CIMCO includes the promotion of health related research to serve humanity and the fostering of collaboration in the field of medical education, training, research and services in the light of the Islamic teachings. Even prior to the establishment of CIMCO, the academic culture of knowledge generation was evident within the membership of FIMA with the establishment of English language medical journals by several IMAs. These included the Journal of Islamic Medical Association of

North America (JIMA) launched in 1976. This was followed by the Journal of Islamic Medical Association of South Africa (JIMASA) launched in 1998, the Bangladesh Journal of Medical Sciences (BJMS) launched in 2009, the Journal of the Islamic Medical Association of Nigeria (IMAN Medical Journal) launched in 2015, two journals from Hayat Foundation Turkey both launched in 2016 (Anatolian Clinic and Journal of Health and Culture) and from the Indonesia Islamic University (a CIMCO member) called Indonesian Journal of Medicine and Health launched in 2009 in the Indonesian language and subsequently indexed by Index Copernicus International this year (2017).

Another milestone in FIMA's contribution to knowledge generation was the establishment of a publication called the FIMA Yearbook in 1996. The FIMA yearbook has over the years been an important reference and resource material for knowledge on the application of Islamic principles in the health sciences. Thus FIMA through its member associations and affiliates has a wealth of experience in running academic publications. The experience of BJMS is particularly encouraging. Hosted by the Ibn Sina Trust and the Ibn Sina Medical College (a CIMCO member) it started modestly in 2009 with three issues and a total number of 21 articles. With support from FIMA-CIMCO, by the year 2012 it was able to publish 189 articles of which 125 were from outside the host country. The number of submission now is three to four times more than number the journal can publish. The BJMS now frequently receives around 1000 articles per year but can accommodate only around 140 articles after the peer review process. This reflects the attraction and attention it has garnered from medical scientists throughout the globe. The involvement of FIMA-CIMCO was particularly significant in this respect. From the outset, contributions were received from the then FIMA president¹ and other office bearers

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covering various topics on Medical Sciences. FIMA's involvement heralded the beginning of international submissions to the BJMS. In 2009 a FIMA-CIMCO meeting hosted in Malaysia by a CIMCO member; Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences (CUCMS) acted as a catalyst for BJMS to receive many manuscripts from medical educationists, researchers, scientists and scholars from within FIMA-CIMCO. A special edition of the 2009 FIMA yearbook captured the salient messages which emanated from that meeting². Another important output from the meeting were interesting articles on future challenges in medical education, towards preparation of highest quality medical professionals, revival of medical research in the Muslim World, experiences of embracing Islamic values in the medical curriculum, professional development and pharmaceutical industry were published in the BJMS³⁻⁸. These articles attracted readers from different parts of the globe, which ultimately led the journal to achieve a global standard. It also received articles based on clinical research and interesting case reports from practitioners⁹. FIMA-CIMCO scholars were also deeply involved in reviewing articles for the BJMS ensuring articles published are of global standards. As a result of such relentless, voluntary and benevolent service from scholars of different parts of Muslim World, BJMS was indexed by

SCOPUS in late 2012

At the 34th FIMA Council Meeting of July 2017 in Istanbul, the Council endorsed the establishment of an international journal under the direct leadership of FIMA through CIMCO. With a wealth of experiences, FIMA-CIMCO will now navigate the sea of knowledge and publication through this initiative under the name 'International Journal of Human and Health Sciences'. We are convinced that researchers from around the globe will be attracted by this novel approach of cross-fertilisation between the hard and soft sciences and the holistic and integrative approach which forms the theme of this Journal. This is well in keeping with the ethos of the great scientists and philosophers of the Muslim world in the glorious Golden era of discovery and innovation of the past. We have the experience to make it a success through our coordinated, collaborative and cooperative efforts. We look forward to an exciting and positive future by providing a platform for knowledge to thrive through dissemination of medical opinions and research findings via quality publications. This will serve as a gift to humanity, in keeping with the Islamic mission and vision to spread knowledge, wisdom and blessing to mankind.

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