Editorial

Recent Amendment in the Eligibility Criteria for Medical Teachers in India
-A Bird's Eye View-

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Recently, the Board of Governors (BoG) in supersession of the Medical Council of India, has issued new guidelines for the eligibility and promotion of teachers in Medical Colleges across India[1]. In this article, we are going to summarise these changes. There are three major changes :

I. Revision of the criteria for consideration of published articles

II. Completion of Basic Course in Medical Education as a pre-requisite for promotion

III. Completion of Basic Course in Biomedical Research as a pre-requisite for promotion

I. **Changes in the Publication Criteria:** This is the major change as regards the eligibility of teachers. These changes have been listed below **(Table I).** A comparison has been made with the previous regulations[2]. Notable amongst these changes is that articles published in journals indexed with Index Copernicus are no longer to be considered for promotion.

Table 1. Changes in Publication Criteria.

Before	Now
Number of publications	
For Professor:4 For Asso Professor: 2	For Professor -3 For Asso. Professor : 1
Indexing agencies	
Scopus, PubMed, Medline, Embase / Excerpta Medica, Index Medicus and Index Copernicus	Medline, Pubmed Central, Citation index, Sciences Citation index, Expanded Embase, Scopus, Directory of Open access journals (DoAJ)
The type of articles	
Only original papers	original papers, and meta-analysis, systematic reviews, and case series
The authorship criteria	
First and Corresponding author	First three authors or corresponding author.

A **summary** of the approved indexing agencies is given below:

PubMed is a free search engine which is maintained by National Library of Medicine (NLM) at the National Institutes of Health, Bethseda, Maryland, USA. It provides access to the MEDLINE database of life sciences and biomedical journals.

MEDLINE is the largest subset of PubMed. MESH (Medical Subject Headings) is a vocabulary of key words in PubMed, which may be used to limit one's PubMed search retrieval to MEDLINE citations. In addition, there is a category for filtering journals such that only articles in MEDLINE appear in the search.

PMC (PubMed Central) was launched in the year 2000 as a free archive for full-text biomedical and life sciences journal articles. It is a digital counterpart to the extensive collection of print journals in the US' National Library of Medicine(NLM). Participating publishers deposit their publications in PMC. In addition, the publications of authors who comply with the National Institute of Health's (NIH) policy for public access, and such similar policies of other funding agencies, are also deposited in PMC. Some PMC journals are also MEDLINE journals.

Science Citation Index (SCI) and **Citation index** are currently owned by Clarivate Analytics. It was created by Eugene Garfield and launched in 1964. At that time, it was owned by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). https://clarivate.com/ webofsciencegroup/essays/ concept-citation-indexing/) It is important to note that One Indian Citation Index also exist, which can be misleading.(http://www.indiancitationindex.com)

Embase is an up-to-date research database of biomedical literature. It covers the most important international biomedical literature from 1947 to the present day. All articles are indexed in depth using Elsevier's Life Science thesaurus Embase Indexing and Emtree®. The entire database is also available on multiple platforms, thereby enhancing its utility.

Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books and conference proceedings. It covers all the literature in science, technology, engineering, arts and medicine (STEAM).

Further to add that Embase and Scopus both are both under Elsevier Publication and Though SCI Expanded is there, Expanded Embase does not exist.

DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) is an independent Agency which provides an online directory of peer reviewed and open access journals. https://doaj.org/

Research projects, in lieu of publications can also considered for promotion to the post of Associate Professor. In that case, the faculty needs to be either a Principal or Co-Principal Investigator (P1/CoPI) of a research project. Such a project has to be funded by a national research body such as Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Department of Bio Technology (DBT).

The publication criteria are now more robust and echo the perceptions of medical teachers from across India, as published in a recent article in the same journal[3].

II. Basic Course in Medical Education (now the Revised Basic Course in Medical Education)[4]:
This course covers a wide range of topics encompassing the entire spectrum of medical education. Thus, preparation of learning objectives, teaching-learning methods and assessment methods are taught in this course.
The course has to be conducted under the supervision of either the Regional or Nodal centre, which caters to the particular medical college.

III. Basic Course in Biomedical Research:
All medical faculty in India are supposed to complete a Basic Course in Biomedical Research, conducted by the Ministry of Human Resources Development, through it web portal called SWAYAM[5]. The SWAYAM App is also available on the Android and iOS platforms. This course has 23 modules that cover the entire spectrum of research methodology. Examination includes both and on-line and an offline component. The candidate needs to secure an aggregate of 50% marks in the online tests administered after each module to be eligible for the offline test. A certificate of passing is issued only if the candidate gets 50% or more marks in the offline test.

To ensure that there are no major hiccups as regards the status of the existing medical colleges, and that expansion of medical colleges continues smoothly, a transition period of 2 years has been set aside. The date of notification being 12/2/2020, a medical college may make appointments based on the previous criteria, upto February 2022[1].

Thus, these changes aim to enhance the integrity of research. They seek to improve the quality of medical education by ensuring that training of faculty is mandatory. However, as someone said, 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating.' Hence, one hopes that these changes will indeed usher in the meaningful improvement in quality of research and education in India, that they are meant for !

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