



Leaving behind fond memories, I am stepping away from my role as editor of the *Ewha Medical Journal* after finalizing this issue's theme

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Joyful memories of editing

"I have revised the source code and redrawn the figures in the manuscript. Thank you for your help."

This brief message came from undergraduate student Yoonseo Jang when she submitted her revised manuscript. While preparing a machine learning paper using the publicly available diabetes dataset from Scikit-learn, she had been asked to revise the Python code and redraw the receiver operating characteristic curves for each model. She submitted the revised version with precisely corrected code and updated figures [1]. It was immensely gratifying to see her deep understanding of machine learning and data analysis, which far exceeded expectations for an undergraduate author. During my 2 years as the editor of the *Ewha Medical Journal*, beginning in September 2023 [2], the most rewarding experiences were receiving manuscripts from undergraduate authors, guiding them through peer review and revision, and ensuring that their papers adhered to reporting guidelines while preserving the integrity of data analysis. Beyond Ms. Jang, numerous undergraduates submitted diverse manuscripts, including original articles, reviews, correspondence, and interviews—that I was pleased to edit and publish. As noted in a 2012 Letter to the Editor [3], we have been fortunate to dedicate space for publishing research by undergraduate and graduate students. This is one of the defining features of the *Ewha Medical Journal* as a college-based publication.

I was also delighted to collaborate closely with members of the editorial board, maintaining constant communication throughout the editing process. The current Associate Editors and Assistant

Editors have demonstrated exceptional expertise in both research and clinical practice, and they have rapidly acquired a wide range of editorial skills. Just as training is essential in research and clinical work, effective editing requires broad interdisciplinary knowledge, the ability to evaluate manuscripts from multiple perspectives, and discernment in selecting submissions that align with the journal's mission. As former Editor Dr. Ryung-Ah Lee observed, we were fortunate to have active participation from leading faculty members.

In taking on the editorial role, I also took great satisfaction in restructuring the journal's website to meet the standards of leading international academic journals and to provide comprehensive information on editorial policies. The core of any journal lies, of course, in the scientific rigor, originality, and relevance of its papers. While the technical refinement of the website was outsourced to a specialized company, the editor is ultimately responsible for supplying the necessary content. Editors of Korean academic journals and university presses often serve as both editor and publisher, handling numerous detailed tasks that editors at large commercial publishing houses typically do not manage [4]. For instance, they must implement various Crossref services, such as assigning Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) [5]; generate JATS XML files that meet the standards required for PubMed Central (PMC) indexing [6]; understand the entire editorial workflow, including manuscript editing [7]; and communicate effectively with service providers. All of these tasks were successfully completed with the strong support of the executive board of Ewha Womans University College of Medicine.

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Goals achieved and not fulfilled

For the October 2023 issue, as a new editor, I prioritized 2 main goals: increasing the number of published papers and achieving inclusion in international indexing databases. From the January to July 2023 issues, a total of 8 papers were published. Thereafter, 25 additional papers were added, bringing the total to 33. In 2024, 74 papers were published, followed by 73 in 2025. In total, 202 papers were published over 2 years under my leadership—a clear achievement of one of our primary goals. However, inclusion in major international databases remains an unfulfilled ambition. Although we succeeded in being indexed in DOAJ and PMC, our application to Scopus was unsuccessful, which remains a disappointment. The main reasons cited included the low annual publication volume, the presence of multiple subject areas without a clear central focus, a relatively high proportion of international submissions, and a perceived lack of coherence in editorial direction [4].

While increasing the number of papers is feasible, achieving thematic cohesion across diverse topics is inherently difficult for a general medical journal. We have welcomed submissions from international authors, even when their primary regional focus was Korea, as long as their work contributed meaningfully to clinical practice. There was no reason to reject manuscripts based on nationality alone. The criticism of limited editorial focus remains a challenging issue. Nonetheless, the *Ewha Medical Journal's* editorial policy is firmly centered on publishing manuscripts that strictly follow reporting guidelines to ensure scientific rigor. To support this goal, we developed an author template that integrates key elements from reporting guidelines. Few journals internationally have taken such systematic steps to encourage precise adherence to these standards. This policy of prioritizing scientific rigor is expected to demonstrate its full value through increased citation rates in the near future. Since the *Ewha Medical Journal* became searchable in PMC as of August 25, 2025 [8], its citation rate is projected to rise significantly beginning in 2026, as has been observed in other PMC-indexed journals [9].

Where should editorial standards be set in medical journal publishing?

We often assume that the editorial process is simply about carefully selecting and publishing the highest-quality manuscripts. However, according to the late Dr. Seung-Yull Cho (1943–2019) [10], a pioneer in Korean medical journal editing, the goal is to “select manuscripts meeting minimum standards and of a certain level” for publication. Some high-impact SCIE journals may in-

deed be able to select manuscripts of the highest caliber from both domestic and international authors. However, the reality for most journals is that they must publish manuscripts that meet a consistent standard to maintain a uniform level of quality across published articles.

Why is this necessary? Just as the most fundamental priorities in patient care are patient safety and protection of personal information, academic journals also require baseline standards that ensure ethical and scientific soundness, particularly for research involving patients or human subjects. Unlike other academic disciplines, medical research is directly linked to patient safety, making such standards indispensable. The acceptance threshold of a journal ultimately depends on the quality of the papers it receives. If a journal aims to publish a certain number of articles each year at a specific standard, manuscripts are selected relative to that benchmark. Over the past 2 years, I have consistently upheld these editorial standards, though it remains challenging to judge whether every accepted manuscript truly meets the threshold. Third-party evaluations, such as those by the Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board, have sometimes differed from assessments by PMC reviewers, with Scopus concluding that we fell short of their criteria.

To help ensure compliance with minimum standards, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) [11] and vibe coding [12] will be increasingly valuable. Although only 3 years have passed since the release of the first publicly available generative AI, ChatGPT, the quality of AI-generated responses has improved remarkably. AI tools can sometimes identify issues that editors may overlook during manuscript review, particularly in areas such as adherence to reporting formats or consistency in reference styles. They are especially effective in checking the basic structure and formatting of manuscripts, thereby supporting editors in maintaining uniform quality and efficiency. The journal's policy on the use of generative AI in manuscript review does not prohibit its use, provided confidentiality is maintained [13].

Three special topics in this issue

The first of the 3 review topics in this issue addresses “lifestyle modification for disease management in primary care.” The clinical message for primary care providers is clear: prioritize lifestyle prescriptions as first-line treatment and ensure continued support for adherence. The authors specifically focus on diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. Their recommendations are clear, evidence-based, and directly applicable to patient care, providing practical guidance for clinicians managing these common chronic diseases.

The second group of reviews focuses on “integrated, person-centered geriatric care aimed at preserving functional ability.” These papers include detailed discussions on geriatric rehabilitation, post-polio syndrome among polio survivors, and hip fractures complicated by cognitive impairment. One policy-oriented paper highlights systemic reforms underway in Korea, emphasizing the shift from provider-centered to person-centered integrated care under the 2024 Integrated Community Care Support Act. This transformation requires redefining long-term care facilities, developing a professional care manager workforce, enabling data interoperability, aligning reimbursement systems with outcomes, and expanding community-based alternatives to institutional care.

The third topic centers on “tailoring perioperative anesthesia and analgesia to the patient, the surgical procedure, and the goal of functional recovery.” The papers in this section explore personalized perioperative pain management, the optimal combination of regional and general anesthesia, and the distinctive considerations in pediatric anesthesia. Because children are not “small adults,” clinicians must carefully optimize oxygen levels to prevent both hypoxia and hyperoxia, use quantitative neuromuscular monitoring, maintain normothermia with core temperature monitoring, and individualize airway management and extubation strategies.

I also hope readers will enjoy other engaging features in this issue, beyond the 3 major review topics, including interviews with graduates of Ewha Womans University College of Medicine who have pursued medical careers abroad.

Praying for the *Ewha Medical Journal* to shine even brighter

After serving as editor for 2 years, I now step down from this role. The new editor will continue to develop strategies to ensure the ongoing success of the *Ewha Medical Journal*. Fortunately, since the journal's inclusion in PMC, the number of submissions has increased, creating a more favorable environment than before. I am confident that Dr. Ji Yeon Byun, who will assume the editorial position, will lead the journal to new heights. As long as the full publication budget continues to be supported by the executive board of Ewha Womans University College of Medicine, there should be no difficulties in maintaining its operations.

It has been a great honor to serve as editor of the *Ewha Medical Journal* over the past 2 years. Although not all of my initial goals were fully realized, it was an immensely rewarding experience to edit a general medical journal and contribute to its development. I sincerely hope that by 2027, when Volume 50 is published, the *Ewha Medical Journal* will achieve inclusion in Scopus—allowing

the journal, nurtured by the efforts of countless editors and authors over the past half century, to shine even brighter. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the editorial board members, reviewers, authors, and editors of various collaborating journals who contributed to special issues during these past 2 years, as well as to the executive board of Ewha Womans University College of Medicine for their steadfast and generous support.

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Authors' contribution

All work was completed by Sun Huh.

Conflict of interest

Sun Huh has served as the editor of the *Ewha Medical Journal* since September 2023. However, he was not involved in the peer review process or decision-making for this article. No other potential conflicts of interest relevant to this article were reported.

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