

Preface I

Why did I establish AME?

On the evening of March 3, 2016, we held the event “Mingyi-AME Academic Gala Dinner” in conjunction with the Ming-Yi Medical Charity Foundation at the White Swan Hotel in Guangzhou to celebrate the coverage of *Translational Cancer Research* (“TCR” for short) published by AME into Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE).

So, why did we choose March 3?

TCR is the second journal of AME to be indexed by SCIE, while the first one was *Journal of Thoracic Disease* (*JTD*). Interestingly, both journals were indexed by SCIE after they had been established for three years and three months. Therefore, we chose the date 3rd March to celebrate this second milestone. This celebration also aimed to encourage our team to take up new challenges, and continue publishing quality journals that could be covered in SCIE in an even shorter period of time after their establishment.

Indeed, being covered in SCIE is an important goal. However, it is not our only goal.

We need academic journals as platforms to share ideas. For example, if *The New England Journal of Medicine* (“*NEJM*” for short) belongs to China, we would be able to launch a “column” featuring the history and culture of traditional Chinese medicine in every issue to attract dedicated international enthusiasts and promote traditional Chinese medicine. Of course, this is merely an assumption.

Let us take another example that is closer to reality. Let us assume that an outstanding Ph.D. student has completed his/her research and graduation thesis after 2 or 3 years of hard work. However, according to school regulations, the student can only apply for thesis defence to obtain a diploma after his/her thesis is officially accepted by a SCIE-indexed journal. Unfortunately, the publication process from submission of a thesis to its acceptance takes at least 6–8 months, and may even take much longer in reality.

What does it mean to Ph.D. students whose graduations are postponed by almost one year as their theses could not be published on time? Their future promotions would also be postponed, hence losing their advantage when competing with colleagues of the same age; it may also be possible that their partners may not be willing to wait for them and propose to break up with them...

Such cases might have already happened around us, or they may soon happen if they have not already. We want to put a stop to these unfortunate circumstances, but it is very difficult to do so.

The root of the problem is that the current “academic publishing” industry is too conservative. The peer review system that has been used for hundreds of years by the industry has countless advantages; but it also has an “innate defect”.

An interesting cartoon has depicted the peer review system in a metaphorical way: before it is reviewed, a thesis is like a mundane four-wheeled car; however, the author will then carry out modifications according to the reviewer’s opinions and suggestions, eventually creating an eight-wheeled car with a canon on top.

Here comes the question: is it necessary to spend such huge amount of manpower and time to modify the cars (theses) so “excessively”? Would the “excessive modifications” be misleading to the consumers (readers)?

We may also think about another question: should we create an academic platform with “green path” that allows more efficient publication processes, given that the quality of theses can be maintained? Is it important to do so? If the answers are yes, the next question would be “how are we going to establish this platform?”. Life is about finding and solving problems.

Managing an academic journal requires endless enthusiasm and painstaking effort; it is like a gardener’s dedicated cultivation of beautiful yet fragile flowers. The brand of an academic journal takes years, decades, or even generations to build, but it can also be destroyed overnight.

According to the so called “scientific research process”, researchers start with the selection of topics, then they design research projects, write tenders, apply for funds, start experimentation, collect data, analyse statistics, write papers, select journals to submit their theses, and make countless revisions until the paper is published. As they spend a lot of time and effort on their research, researchers carefully consider which journals they would submit their theses to. One of the most important factors they consider is the reputation of the journal—whether it is recognized and well-respected in the academic arena.

AME was established in July 2009. However, 9 years of establishment is very short when considering the branding process of an academic journal. Therefore, our team members often remind themselves to pay attention to details at all times.

After 9 years of hard work, we have published 60 journals, of which 18 are covered in PubMed and 8 are indexed by SCIE. I believe that a series of our journals will be included in PubMed and SCIE in the near future, and their impact and impact factor will continue to rise. However, other than that, what I hope to see the most is that one day when people are discussing a specific column, they would think of AME and our journals—just as everyone associates “case records” with the case records of Massachusetts General Hospital in *NEJM*. This mutual beneficial cooperation between *NEJM* and Massachusetts General Hospital is a great success. Countless cases have proven that such intertwined bodies will reach new heights together. We hope to create our own beneficial relationships and hence created the “iMDT Corner” (which stands for International Multidisciplinary Case Discussion Corner) in AME’s journals.

When my friends asked me “what kind of company is AME?”, my colleagues and I find it very difficult to explain to them.

Therefore, our team spent a few months sorting out the work AME has done so far: by telling the stories behind the publication of the *Annals of Cardiothoracic Surgery* (ACS), we explain how AME publishes journals; with the MOOK books publishing model, we explain how AME publishes books in happy and easy way with the Book Editors; by looking at the scenes behind the interview project, we find out how AME help Chinese doctors to get on the international stage; through production process of iMDT products, we explain how AME connects doctors with patients and other doctors, and how we put our core value into practice—Patients Come First!

Deep down, I know that we still have a long way to go to reach AME’s goals and dreams. I hope that my colleagues, friends and other like-minded peers can support AME on this long and wonderful journey!

Stephen D. Wang

Founder and CEO of AME Publishing Company