

MEET AN EXPERT: ARMEN YURI GASPARYAN «ON THE RESEARCHER-AUTHOR-REVIEWER- EDITOR CONTINUUM...»



Dr. Armen Yuri Gasparyan has been involved in clinical research on cardiovascular issues in rheumatic disorders since 1994.

Since 2007, he has been working on thrombosis and cardiovascular rheumatology in teaching trusts of the University of Birmingham, UK. As a clinical lecturer, he delivered lectures on the whole course of internal medicine and developed evidence-based guidelines for general practitioners. Over the past five years, he also delivered lectures on clinical rheumatology, science editing, communication, publication ethics and scientometrics in the UK and in other countries.

He is now drafting recommendations on science editing and writing for authors and editor.

Dr Gasparyan was appointed Council Member of the European Association of Science Editors (since 2011) and expert of Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board (since 2015).

He is the Editor of Rheumatology and Editing, Writing & Publishing sections of the Journal of Korean Medical Science (Seoul, Korea) and Associate Editor of Rheumatology International (Springer).

Dr Gasparyan, tell us about your academic career.

I graduated from Yerevan State Medical University in 1997, then worked as an instructor of English-speaking Iranian, Arab and Indian medical students (2002-2007), moved to Birmingham, UK, and started lecturing and doing research on platelet function, thrombosis and inflammation (since 2007). Over the past 7 years, I've developed innovative courses on cardiovascular rheumatology and science communication, both of which were presented at the leading universities in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. I was also fortunate to join faculty of Asfendiyarov Kazakh National Medical University as a visiting professor and share my research and teaching experience with colleagues from clinical and nonclinical departments in 2011-2014.

Could you please reflect on your editorial posts and responsibilities?

I got my interest in editing while reviewing and writing scholarly papers for indexed international

journals. It takes a long time to learn how to write and review articles – years if not decades. Over the past years, I've realized for myself that journal editing is not merely soliciting articles, arranging the review and managing the communication between authors, reviewers and editors. Current generation of journal editors should be skilled in publishing ethics, digital communication, proper research reporting, and academic writing in English. English is the *Lingua Franca* of modern science communication. Those who wish to edit journals and help their authors to publish great articles have to possess academic writing and reporting credentials.

My editorial career started when I moved to the UK and joined an enthusiastic international team of researchers and authors. The first article I wrote for the team (on aspirin resistance and cardiovascular prevention) was accepted by a top-rank journal in cardiovascular medicine (*J Am Coll Cardiol*) and published in 2008. Thereafter, I got numerous reviewer invitations to comment on submissions covering a wide range of issues; and I now proud of more than

than 1500 citations since 2008. That's on top of numerous conference attendances and seminars in rheumatology, research methodology and science communication (more than 50 certified courses).

I was a guest editor of *Current Pharmaceutical Design* (2012, 2014) and *Current Medicinal Chemistry* (2015) and chief editor of *European Science Editing* (2011-2014). I am an associate editor of *Rheumatology International* (Springer, UK) and *J Korean Medical Science* (Seoul, Korea). Editing entails arrangement of peer review, substantive editing, language polishing and communication with authors and reviewers.

Finally, I contribute to many other indexed journals by soliciting quality papers written by experts in different fields. Importantly, I've established my network of 'gold' authors with whom I've managed to publish highly influential special issues and selected articles on a range clinical and scientific issues.

Good editors are those who understand the importance of science editing continuum. They should go up the career ladder by publishing their own papers, reviewing and editing good journals!

susceptible to a range of infections and neoplasms. The practising rheumatologist should monitor the infection risk, be skilled in interpreting results of numerous laboratory and imaging tests, balance between advantages and limitations of traditional and biologic agents. As a clinician with background in general internal medicine, I was fascinated at the



Dr A.Y. Gasparyan at the Annual Conference of the British Society of Rheumatology, April 2013



A group photo of Dr A.Y. Gasparyan with colleagues from Tabriz Heart Center, Iran after a seminar on science communication, October 2012

Why did you choose rheumatology as your main field of research and academic interests?

Rheumatology is rapidly developing at the interface of immunology, cardiology, hematology and oncology. Patients with rheumatic diseases are increasingly treated with immunosuppressive agents making them

pace of progress in rheumatology, and this is why I got involved in the management of patients with autoimmune and autoinflammatory disorders, and particularly those with vascular co-morbidities.

One of the examples of the autoinflammatory disorders is Behcet disease, a vasculitis with predominantly venous thromboses and aneurysms, which are among my main research and academic interests. In the UK, I analyze data on one of the largest cohorts of rheumatoid arthritis patients (400) and pay attention to platelet function in these patients. I feel that my knowledge and skills in hematology and vascular medicine are quite helpful. Fortunately, I revealed and reported some interesting pathophysiological links between platelet activation and rheumatoid inflammation, which yield in several highly-cited papers in great journals. I hope to achieve more by searching through the cohort data and eventually improve education of rheumatologists and patient care.

This year, you were appointed as a member of Scopus Content Selection & Advisory Board (Elsevier). Please accept our sincere congratulations and share your thoughts on how



A group photo of Dr A.Y.Gasparyan with students of KazNMU after a seminar on science writing for young authors, November 2014

newly launched academic journals can get indexed by Scopus and other prestigious databases.

A few months ago, I joined Scopus team and

started reviewing journal applications in my field of expertise. Also, I recommended 30 quality journals to be covered by this highly reputable indexing service. My understanding is that the database is undergoing major changes, which may lead to delisting some poor quality and ‘predatory’ journals.

Indexing a scholarly journal is an uphill task for most publishers and universities worldwide. Science editors who wish to improve indexability of their journals should start educating their authors, reviewers and editors on a range of issues in research methodology, ethical reporting and publishing, and science communication. Scopus is the largest multidisciplinary database tracking abstracts and citations of peer-reviewed journals. Articles indexed by Scopus are currently counted by leading ranking systems such as the QS World Universities Rankings. It is therefore quite important to publish quality articles and journals visible in Scopus to get credits for an academic and research institution.

It is worth mentioning that newly-launched journals should adopt an ethical publishing strategy, establish

reliable peer review, improve reference validation, and check for plagiarism and other forms of misconduct. Once your editorial team set basic publishing standards and publish several issues, you can move forward and apply for indexing and archiving by various local and international online platforms, digital libraries and indexing systems. Scopus has its own indexing criteria. It may take at least 2 years to publish sufficient number of quality issues, get citations and recognition by the international community to satisfy the stringent indexing criteria.

You’re planning an international master program in science editing and communication. What are your priorities and who are potential candidates for the program?

The idea of launching an international course for research fellows was discussed with my collaborators from Tokyo, Japan. We have already arranged two special 2-week courses for promising candidates from KazNMU in 2014 and 2015. The aim of the courses is to join an international English-speaking team of researchers, authors and editors, learn from world-class editors and prepare publishable articles. In 2016, we are planning to arrange a more extended, certified course in Tokyo to help ongoing journal editors become masters in their field. The master program has already been drafted, and we are expecting to receive

a reasonable funding to run the course for selected promising fellows, who will choose editing as their life-long career.

Interviewer:
Meriam I. Abu Jabal