Past and Future Role of NMC

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The English version of the Neurologia medico-chirurgica (NMC) was strongly motivated by Professor Shozo Ishii, to my memory. He might have wished the NMC to become an international publication as a bulletin of the Japan Neurosurgical Society, for current papers written in Japanese had received minimal acceptance for originality worldwide. In spite of his noble ideal, management of the NMC was not so easy as other English language journals published in Japan. Authors with a high quality paper have tended to submit to more famous journals with higher impact factor, so the quality level of submitted papers were limited in the early stage of its foundation. The current chief editor’s great effort to improve the journal for the next 50 years must be respected, and the recent increase in impact factor by Professor Katayama’s editorial team must be worthy of praise.

We have to reconsider the role of NMC based on a worldwide perspective. We must note that in the field of neurosurgery, only a few English language journals have such a long history and high level of reviewer boards in Asia. We must be aware that other Asian countries consider the NMC is the best journal for submissions, in the case of refusal by Western journals. The number of authors from foreign countries continues to increase today, especially from those rapidly advancing countries such as Turkey, China, and India.

These countries have developed very rapidly in the last 10 years, and activity for publishing is increasing, but their neurosurgeons cannot find a suitable English language journal recognized internationally. I think the future role of NMC could be as a representative journal of Asian countries. Today, the level of their submitted papers does not always reach our acceptance level, but we must be patient to review and correct their papers. The scientific level will be closer to Japan in 10 years, and readers of NMC will increase in those countries. This may result in further increases in impact factor, by improving the quality by citation. However, we must aware that the medical levels are quite different in Asian countries, and we should not select papers only by the level of science. Submissions will be increased if new categories of paper could be admitted, such as “report of new medical advancement in our country.”

The most important future development may be to lead other countries through the means of NMC, not to limit exclusive use to Japanese contributors.