

The 6th Asian Science Editors Conference and Workshop 2020
August 21, 2020



Parallel Session #3:

INFLUENCE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON ASIAN SCHOLARLY JOURNAL EDITORS & PUBLISHERS

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Influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on Asian scholarly journal editors' daily life, work, and opinions on future journal development. *Sci Ed* 2020; 7(2):111-117. doi: <https://doi.org/10.6087/kcse.204>

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- We thank the respondents who freely shared their time and suggestions.



PURPOSE

To examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Asian scientific journal editors and/or publishers

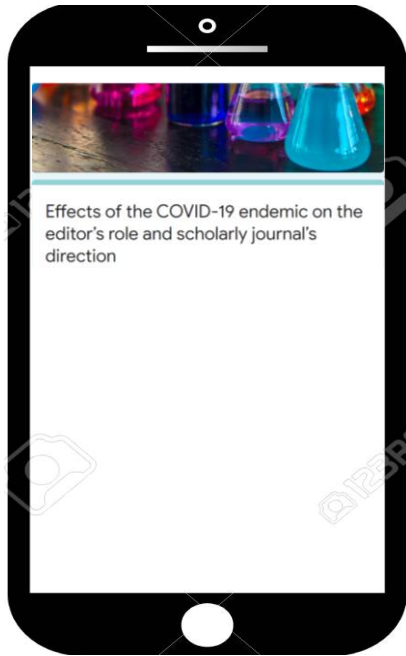
- 1) Daily life and work life
- 2) Identify opinions for anticipated changes

METHODS

Ethical approval was obtained (#HIRB-2020-037)

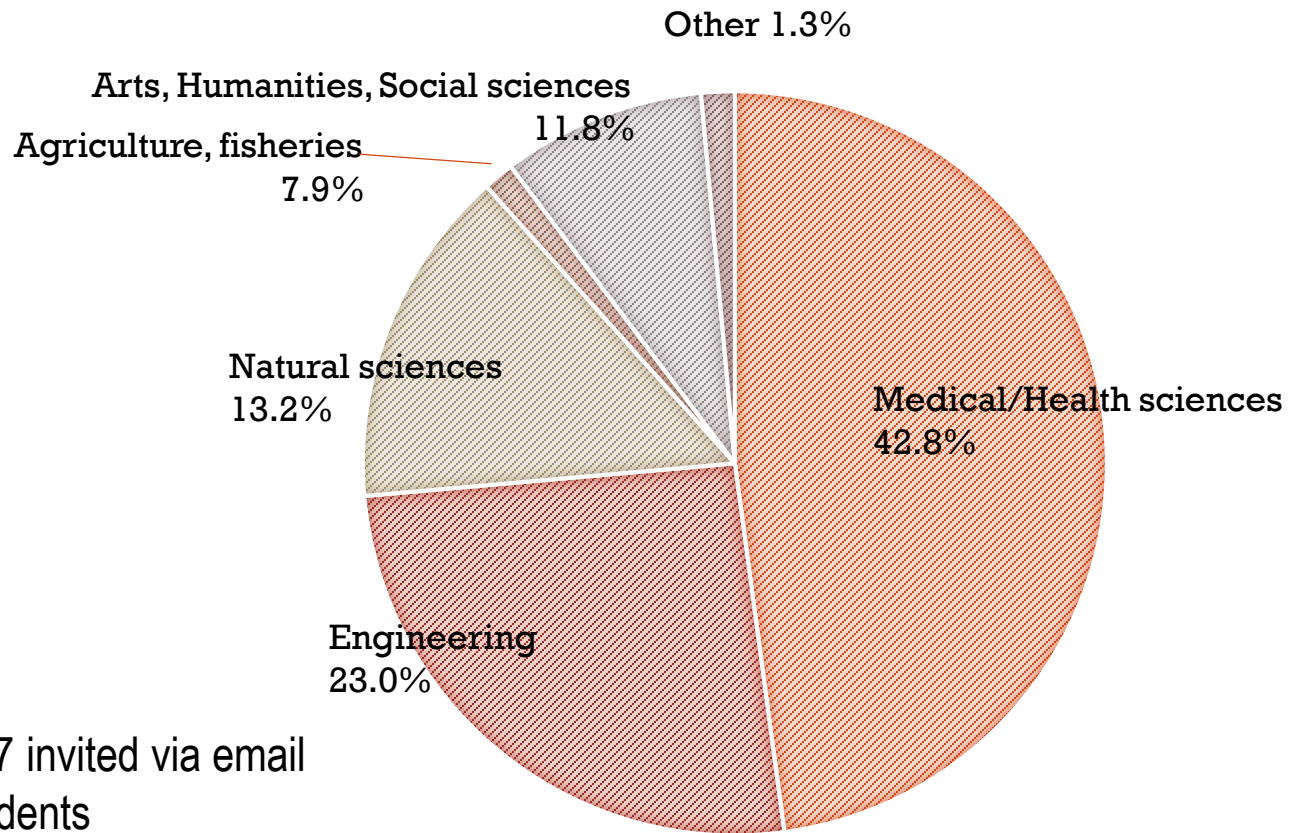
Online survey from July 13-19, 2020

Distributed to editors/publishers via mailing list of KCSE, Korea Federation of Science and Technology, CASE



19 Questions (5 minutes): 2 Likert items, 13 categorical items, 4 open-ended items

- General characteristics (4 items), change in daily life (2 items), change in work life (7 items), anticipating future needs (6 items)



Out of 1,537 invited via email
152 respondents

- Response rate 9.7%

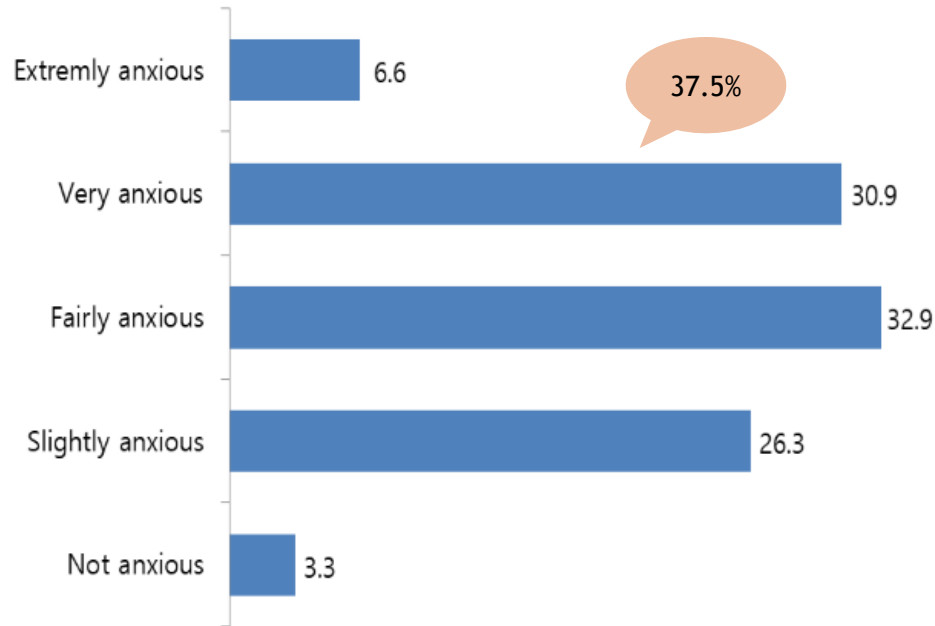


<Table 1> Affiliation and primary role of respondents (N=152)

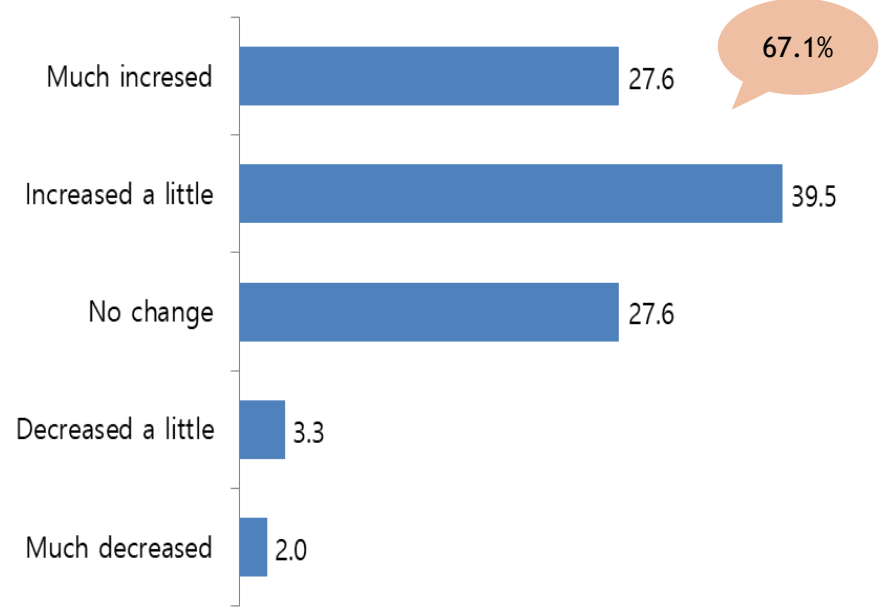
	Editor or editorial board member	Manuscript editor	Staff, academic society	Staff, publishing company	Other	Total
University	110(92.4%)	8(6.7%)	1(.8%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	119(100.0%)
Research institute	8(88.9%)	1(11.1%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	9(100.0%)
Publishing company	2(33.3%)	2(33.3%)	0(0.0%)	2(33.3%)	0(0.0%)	6(100.0%)
Academic society	2(14.3%)	4(28.6%)	8(57.1%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)0	14(100.0%)
Other	1(25.0%)	2(50.0%)	0(0.0%)0	0(0.0%)	1(25.0%)	4(100.0%)
Subtotal	123(80.9%)	17(11.2%)	9(5.9%)	2(1.3%)	1(.7%)	152(100.0%)



How anxious do you feel about COVID-19? (%)



Has your time spent on the internet changed since COVID-19? (%)



Anxiety level and time spent on the internet showed a weak, but statistically significant correlation ($r=0.1986$, $p=0.0142$)



Change in main work place?

- 52.6% Yes (at home; alternatively at home/office)
- 47.4% No change

Work load of editing, reviewing, publishing?

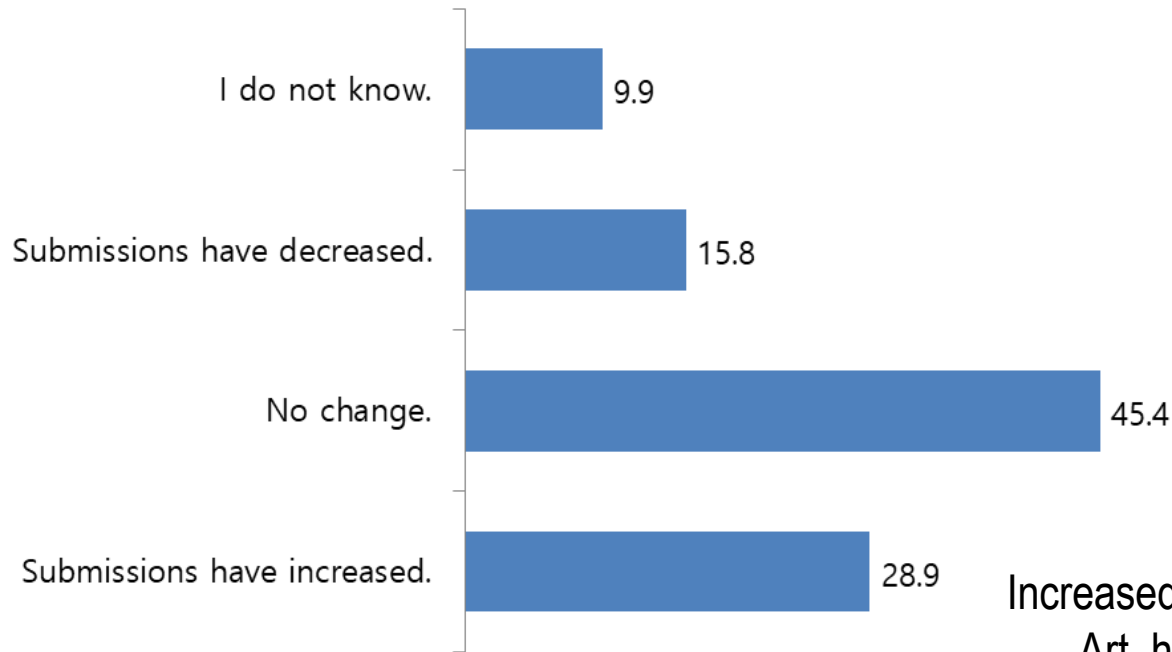
- 58.7% No change
- 34.2% Increased
 - Natural sciences (45.0%) 9/20; Art, humanities, social sciences (44.4%)
 - Medical/health sciences (32.3%); Agriculture, fisheries (33.3%)
 - Engineering (28.6%)

Difficulty communicating with editorial members/publisher?

- 73% No vs 27% Yes



Any changes in the number of submissions to your main journal compared to previous years? (%)

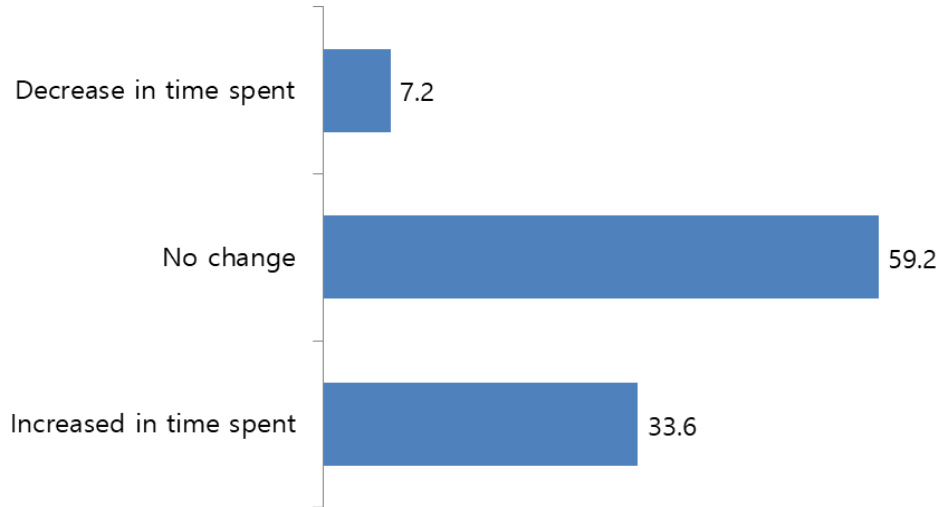


Increased submissions

- Art, humanities, social sciences (44.4%): 8/18
- Natural sciences (35%) 7/20
- Medical/health sciences (32.3%) 21/65
- Agriculture, fisheries (25%) 3/12
- Engineering (14.3%) 5/35



Would you say more time is spent on reviewing or editing manuscripts since COVID-19? (%)



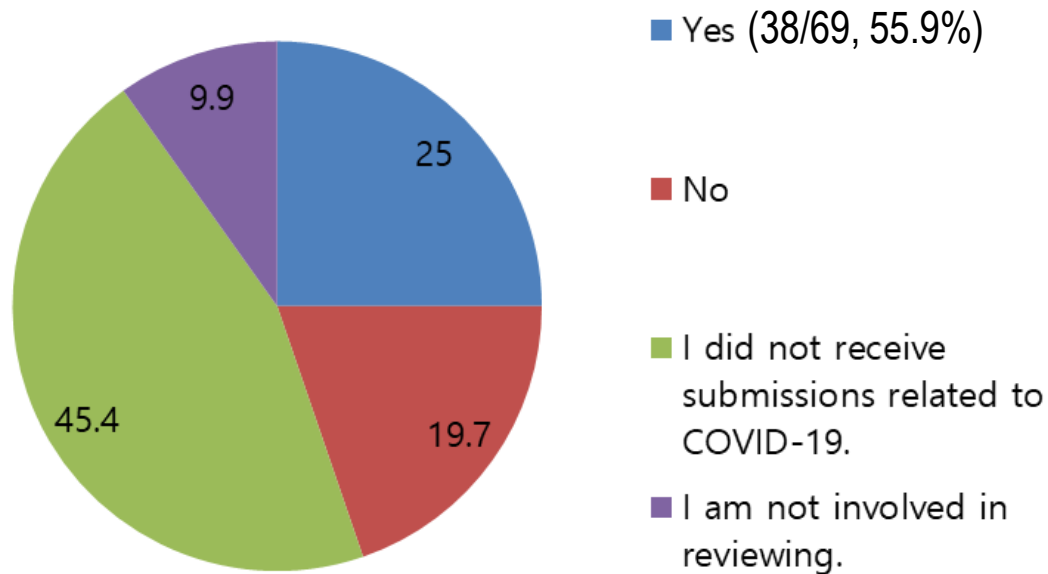
Thus,
Submission changes 'don't know' (n=15) removed,
Decreased load + no change → 'others'

df=1, $\chi^2=3.84$, $p=0.0008$

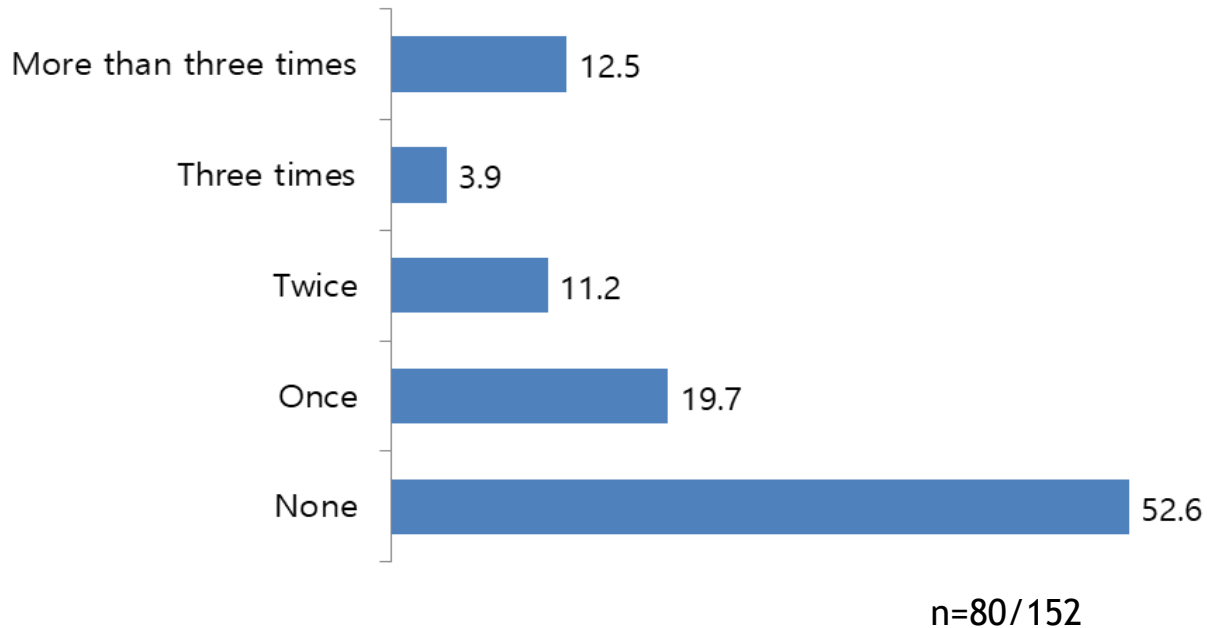
	Increased submissions		
Increased load	Yes	Others	Total
Yes	25	24	49
Others	19	69	88
Total	44	93	137



When you edit or review manuscripts related to COVID-19 (if any), do you give any preference to them, for example, fast-track review? (%)



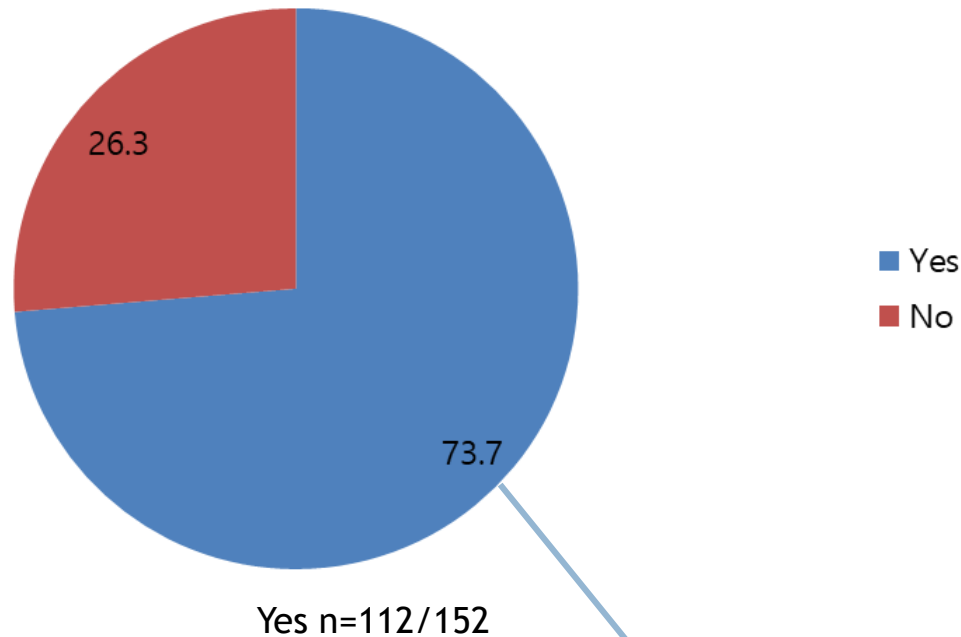
How many times have you attended online training programs for journal editing or publishing, from March to June, 2020? (%)



- Suggests the need for more online training opportunities



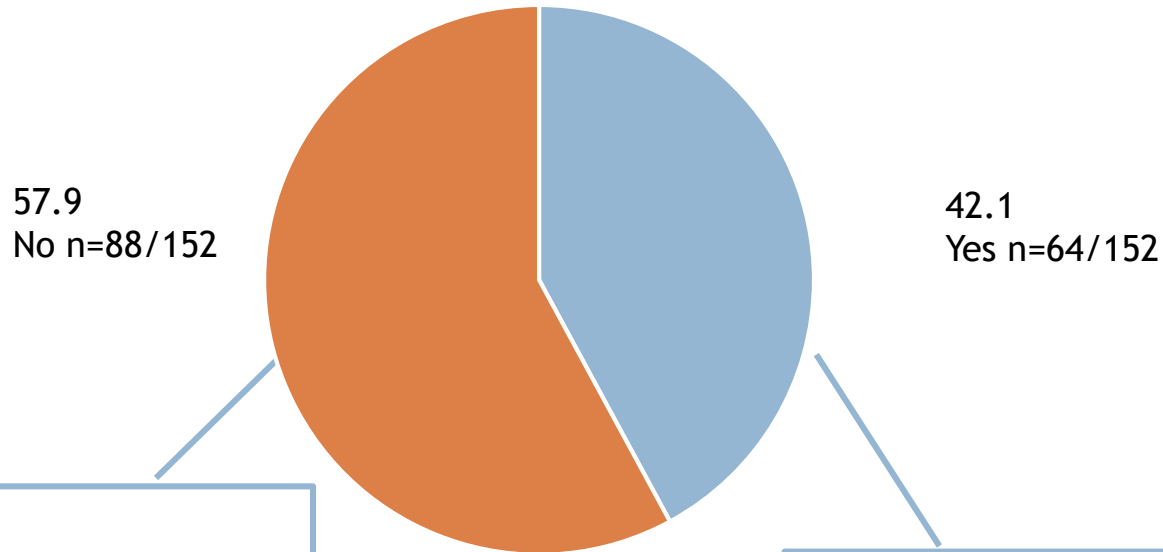
**Do you think that online-only journal publishing
will be expanded after the COVID-19 endemic? (%)**



Reasons:
Irreversible trends (38); easy access (7),
rapid communication (3), economic
advantages (3),
non-face to face exchange (1)



**Do you think that the need for journal publishing
(number of articles or number of journals) will
increase after the COVID-19 endemic? (%)**



Reasons:

Decreased research activities, including exchange programs (10), no change of the publication environment (10), negative economic impact (3), saturated journal market (3)

Reasons:

Emergence of new topics due to COVID-19 pandemic (11), more time for authors to write (9), expansion of the information market (1), government's pressure to publish (1)

Other changes expected from COVID-19

Category	Examples
No changes (17)	Already online journal; Quality of manuscripts are not affected
Online publishing related (12)	Online publishing/platforms will increase; Need for open access (OA)
Online meetings (7)	More editorial board meeting will be held online; Need for collaborative meetings among editors; Training/workshops;
Decreased submissions (7)	Possible cuts in research funds; Difficulties in conducting research; Journal sustainability concerns if COVID-19 continues for a long time
COVID-19 articles (6)	Publishing guideline for COVID-19 for better sharing of information; Higher citations of COVID-19 articles
Budget issues (3)	OA and low APC; High priced software/services should be lowered
Editing issues (3)	Deadline pressure; Need for more personnel in case of COVID-19 infection
Reviewing (2)	Rapid/sound reviewing
Preprint (2)	Greater awareness of preprint
Other	Increased competition; Unpredictable



Suggested topics for future training programs related to editing or publishing

Category	Examples
Editing (15)	How to attract quality manuscripts; Manuscript handling; Quality improvement; Rules for fast-track publishing; AI in publishing
Publication ethics (9)	Fast-track publication and ethical issues; Retraction of articles; Best practices of ethics/editorial flow; Plagiarism check training
Publication (8)	Practical OJS; Plan S; Digital standards for online journals
Online training (4)	More detailed online training tools; Regular learning opportunities
Peer review (4)	Effective reviewing; getting quick review
Indexing (2)	International DB indexing
Collaboration (1)	Collaborating with other editors



CONCLUSIONS

- The COVID-19 pandemic was a source of considerable anxiety for more than one-third of Asian editors and publishers, especially as they spent more time on the internet.
- Some worked harder during the COVID-19 pandemic period than before and their increased workload was associated with an increased number of submissions.
- As such, a closer examination of editor and publishers' work and anxiety may be needed as the pandemic drags on.
- Traditional topics for training programs were still valid (e.g., publication ethics, more advanced journal management, and editors' collaboration, etc.). But a sizable proportion of respondents believed that more editorial or publishing work would be done via online in the future.
- Thus, preparing editors for automated processing and educating them on digital standards appears to be an emerging area of need.



Thank you for your attention

