Ongoing Changes in Exercise Science for Further Challenges

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Founded in 1988, the Korean Society of Exercise Physiology launched *Exercise Science* in 1992, and as of 2023, the 32nd volume is in progress. *Exercise Science* was selected as a candidate for registration by the National Research Foundation of Korea in 2001 and approved as a registered academic journal in 2003. In 2020, *Exercise Science* succeeded in being indexed in Scopus for the first time among Korean journals in the field of exercise and sports science. Following this feat, *Exercise Science* attempted to be indexed in SCIE and PubMed as well but was not successful in receiving approval from both. However, this experience gave us a direction where the journal *Exercise Science* should go. As the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Exercise Science*, I am delighted to introduce what efforts our editorial board has made to improve our journal and what changes are ahead for our further challenges.

Our initial step involved establishing English versions of our research ethics enforcement regulation to bridge the language gap. Nevertheless, feedback has highlighted inconsistencies between the Korean and English regulations in format and content. We are currently engaged in harmonizing these regulations, reaching the final stages of this crucial process. Furthermore, we recognized the need for specific research ethics guidelines for vulnerable groups, including infants and individuals with disabilities. To this end, we are diligently shaping these regulations, close to their finalization. Also, we are in the process of revising and customizing these guidelines to better suit the domain of *Exercise Science*. These efforts aim to enhance the globalization of the journal.

Another significant observation was the limited number of papers containing Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval. In fact, less than 30% of papers published in each issue of *Exercise Science* have received research ethics clearance. To rectify this, our editorial board is in the final stages of deliberation regarding a mandatory IRB approval, beginning with the November 2024 issue. This IRB approval mandatory measure is indispensable as we strive towards SCIE indexing.

Addressing the imperative need for improved research quality, which includes issues such as a lack of scientific rigor and quality control, an excessively high publication rate (60%), and the lack of specificity in research methods and designs, has been our consistent concern. We are actively crafting core review guidelines for our paper reviewers, which will provide a structured framework, reducing disparities in review focus and facilitating consistent, systematic, and in-depth evaluations. Papers that merely reiterate prior research or remain at the observational level without the suggestion of new value will undergo an exclusion.

Furthermore, we have identified the issue that the number of papers written in English is limited, and often riddled with grammatical inaccuracies in English papers and abstracts. To address this, we are currently in the process of recruiting researchers with insights in exercise science and physiology from international institutions to join our editorial board. Their involvement will extend beyond formality, as they will play a practical role in elevating our journal’s depth as well as language standards.

Despite our aspiration to be an international journal, the preponderance of domestic authors remains a challenge. However, we are witnessing a gradual increase in submissions from researchers outside of Korea following our Scopus indexing. Additionally, to enhance the submission

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rate of English papers by domestic researchers, we are actively discussing the provision of support for English paper translations for early submissions.

In pursuit of rectifying these multifaceted issues, the editorial committee of Exercise Science has established subcommittees and is diligently working to enact specific and pragmatic measures. Through these efforts, we were able to bring about many changes in a short period of time. We learn through failure. There is a Korean proverb that says, ‘You can’t be full at the first spoonful.’ Our initial SCIE indexing endeavor may not have met our expectations. However, through those challenges, we have learned where Exercise Science should go to advance. Above all, we are united in our shared vision for the future. We will take on the challenge again and continue our current efforts. We will continue to ‘change’ and move forward to take on the ‘challenge’ of becoming a leading journal in the field of Exercise Physiology on a larger stage beyond Korea.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they do not have conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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