During a discussion on copyright I recently had with a number of local editors, I asked myself why should a small medical journal need to hold the copyright? While it is still a common practice for journals to require authors to transfer copyright to the publisher, does the IJOEM publisher need to hold the copyright of articles published in the journal? IJOEM wants to be able to publish an article first (paper and electronic format) and nothing more. With this in mind, the IJOEM is changing its copyright policy. We believe this change is author-friendly and could lead to further dissemination of knowledge in part, because it allows others to freely and fairly use what we have published.

Beginning from January 2012, authors will retain copyright and only be required to grant us the right to publish their article and to be the first to do so. The new copyright policy is as follows and will be included in our Instructions to Authors:

Authors who publish with The IJOEM agree to the following terms:

a. Authors retain copyright and grant The IJOEM the exclusive license and right of first publication with the work simultaneously licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), which allows the work to be freely used, distributed, and built upon for non-commercial reasons, as long as proper attribution to the work’s authorship and initial publication in The IJOEM is given.

b. Authors are permitted to distribute the journal’s published version of the work (e.g., post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book), with an acknowledgement of its initial publication in The IJOEM.

The IJOEM has had two successful years and we look forward to more. We have tried to make our policies and instructions to authors simple and clear. With this new copyright policy we also believe we are offering our authors a new and important way to publish their work. The IJOEM is looking forward to its future, thanks to our authors, readers, reviewers and editorial board members.

Farrokh Habibzadeh, MD,
Editor, The IJOEM