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## Special Issues in Medicine & Surgery

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### Opinion

## What is NMC Indexed or NMC Approved Journals?

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### ARTICLE INFO

Handling Editor: Dr. R.P. Shukla

#### Key Words:

NMC- Indexed journals  
Medical research  
Journal selection  
Predatory journals  
Indexing verification

### ABSTRACT

The National Medical Commission (NMC) released guidelines in 2021 regarding faculty eligibility and journal indexing for research publications in medical institutions. To address the confusion surrounding journal selection, the term “NMC-indexed Journal” was introduced to refer to journals indexed in Medline, PubMed Central, Science Citation Index, Science Citation Index Expanded, Embase, Scopus, and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). These guidelines impact faculty promotions, making it essential to verify journal indexing before submission. Many medical professionals face challenges in identifying credible journals, as misleading claims about indexing are common. Predatory journals often advertise fast-track publication services for commercial gains, which can misguide researchers. Verification through official indexing databases such as DOAJ, Scopus, PubMed, and Clarivate Analytics is crucial to ensure legitimacy. Faculty members should check journal indexing at the time of publication and confirm the presence of print and online ISSN numbers. Additionally, a journal's classification as international requires editorial board representation from multiple countries and international manuscript submissions. Newly established journals are often ineligible for recognized indexing, necessitating scrutiny before submission. To aid researchers in journal selection, a web tool (<https://nmcindexedjournals.org/>) has been developed to verify journal indexing as per NMC guidelines. This platform helps differentiate between legitimate indexed journals and predatory ones, promoting ethical publication practices and enhancing research credibility. Ensuring adherence to NMC indexing criteria is vital for maintaining academic integrity and the quality of medical literature.

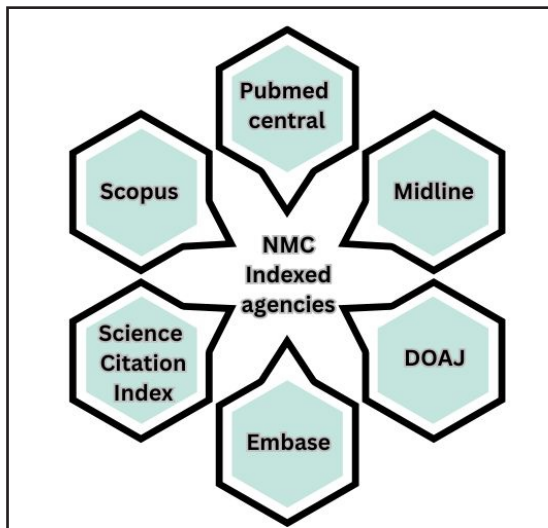
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Article History: Received 21 December 2022; Accepted 14 March 2023; Published 15 April 2025

How To Cite: Pravesh Verma & Navneet Kumar, What is NMC Indexed or NMC Approved Journals?. *JRAAS: Special Issues in Medicine & Surgery*;2025,40(1)1-3

## INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the National Medical Commission (NMC) released guidelines/regulations regarding teachers eligibility and minimum qualifications in medical institutions. These guidelines introduced a rule for the promotion to associate professors and professors. According to this rule, only original research papers, meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and case series published in journals indexed in Medline, PubMed Central, Science Citation Index, Science Citation Index Expanded, Embase, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) will be considered.



**Figure 1: Indexing Agencies Recognized by NMC**

After the release of this guideline, confusion arose among medical professionals regarding journal selection. During meetings and training sessions in medical colleges and universities, we faced difficulties in conveying information about journal indexing. To address this issue, we coined the term “**NMC-indexed Journal**” to refer to journals indexed in at least one of the indexing agencies recommended by the NMC (Medline, PubMed Central, Science Citation Index, Science Citation Index Expanded, Embase, Scopus, and Directory of Open Access Journals). The terms “**NMC indexed journal**” and “**NMC approved journal**” were not formally recognized in academic or regulatory domains prior to their introduction by us.

Most medical professionals excel in research and possess substantial knowledge about submitting research proposals to the research and ethics committees. However, one of the primary challenges they face is getting their completed research published. To navigate this, it is essential to understand how to select an appropriate journal that aligns with the guidelines set by the National Medical Commission (NMC). A common approach among faculty members is to search for journals on Google, which yields hundreds of options in the field of health and medical research. Many journal websites claim to be indexed in databases such as

Scopus, PubMed, and DOAJ. However, due to a lack of awareness regarding journal selection and the absence of an official list from NMC specifying approved journals, many faculty members rely solely on journal websites to submit their work. Additionally, some journals offer fast-track or ultra-fast-track publication services, often for commercial gains, which can mislead researchers. This communication aims to assist medical faculty in identifying journals that comply with NMC guidelines, ensuring their research is published in credible and recognized platforms.

The information provided on journals website may not always be accurate. When evaluating a journal, it is important to verify its claims, especially regarding indexing and impact factor. The only recognized impact factor is the one provided by Clarivate Analytics (formerly Thomson Reuters). For instance, if a journal claims to be indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), its authenticity can be verified by visiting the official DOAJ website (<https://doaj.org/>) and searching for the journal by name in the search bar. Additionally, it is crucial to confirm whether the journal has both print and online ISSN numbers. Another important aspect to check is whether the journal is classified as national or international. A journal cannot be considered international solely based on its name; it must have editorial board members from multiple countries and should regularly receive manuscript submissions from international researchers.

To publish in a Scopus & Embase indexed journals, it is essential to verify its indexing status. This can be done by visiting the Scopus & Embase journal search portal. Enter the journals name in the search bar and proceed with the search. If the journal appears in the results, selecting it will open its dedicated page, where you can confirm whether it is indexed in Scopus & Embase for the current year. It is important to note that a publication is considered valid only if the journal is indexed during the year of publication. Additionally, ensure that the journal has both print and online ISSN numbers to verify its legitimacy. Similarly, for PubMed & Medline indexed journals, the verification process follows the same steps. You can check a journal indexing status by searching for it on the PubMed-Medline journal database at NCBI NLM Catalog.

An essential factor in identifying predatory journals is checking their start date. Newly established journals are often ineligible for indexing in major databases recognized by the National Medical Commission (NMC). Therefore, before submitting a manuscript, it is crucial to verify whether the journal has a credible history and meets indexing requirements.

Many journals on the internet claim to be indexed in reputed databases, but often, this information is misleading or inaccurate. Such false indexing claims can misguide researchers, clinicians, and academicians, leading to the selection of non-credible sources for publishing or referencing scientific work.

This issue poses a significant challenge to maintaining the quality and integrity of medical literature. To address this concern, the web tool <https://nmcindexedjournals.org> serves as a valuable resource for medical professionals, researchers, and academicians. It enables users to verify the indexing status of journals as per the guidelines set by the National Medical Commission (NMC). By providing accurate and updated information, this platform helps in distinguishing genuine indexed journals from predatory or falsely claimed ones. Ensuring that journals adhere to NMC indexing criteria is crucial for upholding the credibility of published research, securing ethical publication practices, and enhancing the overall quality of medical education and scientific contributions. The tool thus plays a significant role in guiding professionals towards reputable publication avenues, preventing academic fraud, and promoting transparency in medical research.

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