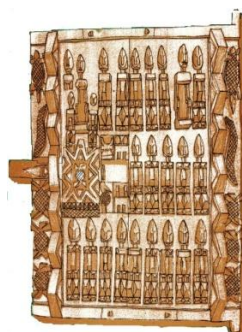


## Editorial



## Fifty Years Of The Mali Medical Journal

### Introduction

In 1975, the faculty of the National School of Medicine and Pharmacy established a Medical Society (human and veterinary) chaired by Dr. Aliou Ba. That same year, this Society founded the scientific journal *Mali Medical*, a quarterly general-interest publication. It was directed and edited from 1975 to 1977 by Dr. Yaya Fofana. After a hiatus in 1978 and 1979, publication of *Mali Medical* resumed in 1980, thanks to the revitalization efforts of the Malian Medical Society. Thus, *Mali Medical* resumed regular publication under the direction of Dr. Abdel Karim Koumare from 1980 to 1985. This regular publication and its distribution in Francophone Africa for over three years (major criteria at that time for PubMed) led to *Mali Médical*'s recognition by PubMed. The non-publication of *Mali Médical* in 1986 and 1987 resulted in PubMed revoking its recognition. The journal *Mali Medical* has been published and distributed again since 1994 under the direction of Dr. Siaka Sidibe as Editor-in-Chief. Despite regular reprinting and distribution, *Mali Medical* was only recognized in 1998 by CAMES (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education) as a regional scientific publication and indexed by PubMed in 2008.

This editorial from *Mali Médical* focuses on its Editorial Board, its action plan from 1999 to 2025, its partnerships, its prospects, and its recommendations.

### The Editorial Board of Mali Medical

The journal was managed by an editorial board of seven (7) members elected for a renewable three (3) year term. These members, all professors at the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Odontostomatology of Mali, volunteered their time as editors. Given the scale of the editorial tasks, the Malian Medical Society increased the number of editorial committee members to 13 in 2019. At that time, this body was renamed the "Editorial Office of Mali Medical." This office comprises a Sponsorship Committee, a Management Committee, and an Editorial Committee with an editorial manager. Members of all these committees work on a voluntary basis for *Mali Medical*.

### Mali Medical's Action Plan from 1999 to 2025

In July 1999, *Mali Medical* developed an action plan based on the following points: (i) adapting the journal's editorial guidelines to international recommendations for scientific publishing; (ii) ensuring the regular and timely publication of journal volumes; (iii) improving the quality and distribution of the journal; (iii) developing the journal's marketing plan; and (iii) seeking sustainable sources of funding

for the journal's activities. The main results obtained through the implementation of this action plan are as follows:

• **Improving the quality of the journal and working towards its regular publication:** The Editorial Board has, among other things, developed and widely distributed the editorial guidelines for Mali Medical, as well as updated the list of reviewers. These actions have led to a steady increase in submissions, greater engagement from most reviewers, and a more consistent publication schedule. These results have been consolidated through: (i) the online publication of Mali Médical (2004) on the website "malimedical.org" with the slogan "**If you can't come to Mali, we'll bring Mali to you**"; (ii) the indexing of Mali Médical in Medline (2006) and PubMed (2008); (iii) the registration of Mali Médical in 2007 under ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) 0464-7874 (print version) and 1993-0836 (electronic version); (iii) the indexing of Mali Médical in MedLine-PubMed Central (2025). These actions all benefited from the multifaceted support of the African Journal Partnership Project, which was transformed in 2016 into the African Journal Partnership Programme.

• **Improving journal distribution:** The ultimate goal of a scientific journal is the dissemination of research results. The editorial team of Mali Medical, through the structures of the Ministry of Health and the services of the WHO office in Bamako, has undertaken the distribution of the print version of the journal throughout the country, in the libraries of sister medical schools in Francophone Africa, and in the WHO library in Geneva. Furthermore, since its indexing in major databases, Mali Médical is read worldwide thanks to its fully open access policy.

• **Long-term funding for the journal:** In 1999 and 2000, the editorial board approached the Malian Medical Society for a systematic subscription to the journal for all faculty members at the Faculty of Medicine. This approach, although welcomed by all, did not yield the expected results. Thus, in 2001, the editorial committee negotiated a flat-rate annual subscription with the management of the Point "G" Hospital, Gabriel Touré Hospital, Kati Hospital, and the National Institute of Public Health Research (INRSP), now the National Institute of Public Health (INSP). The subscription covered 20 copies of each issue for the first two institutions and 10 copies for the other two. While the Point "G" Hospital paid its subscription for 2001 and 2002, the other institutions failed to honor their commitment despite the editorial team's sustained efforts. In parallel with this initiative, the editorial committee approached the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for support in covering the printing and binding costs of the four annual issues of the journal (1,000,000 CFA francs per issue). As a result, the journal received a one-year subscription in 2001 for approximately one hundred teachers from the Ministry of Higher Education, through the Faculty of Medicine. In 2001 and 2002, 60 health districts across the country received a two-year subscription from the Ministry of Health, through the WHO (World Health Organization) representation in Mali, along with a desktop computer and a printer. Despite the short duration of this support, the editorial secretariat of Mali Medical regularly distributed the journal to the 60 health districts of Mali, up to issue number Mali Médical 2007;22(4), representing an additional five (5) years. Finally, in 2021, the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry allocated an office to the journal Mali Medical, which until then had been located in the editor-in-chief's office. Despite these achievements, challenges remain, including the obvious one of securing long-term funding.

## **The Mali Médical Partnership**

In August 2003, Mali Medical applied to WHO/TDR, Geneva (within the framework of the "support program of this institution committed to disseminating the results of local research in Africa"). Thus, a partnership project (African Journal Partnership Project, AJPP) was established in 2004 between, on the one hand, 4 African journals (African Health Sciences of Uganda, Ghana Medical Journal, Malawi Medical Journal, Mali Medical) and, on the other hand, 5 journals from the north (British Medical Journal (BMJ), The Lancet, Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA), Environmental Health Perspectives (EHP), American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)). In 2008, two new African journals (Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences, Annals of African Surgery of Zambia) and two from the North (Annales of Internal Medicine (AIM), New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)) joined the partnership project. Finally, in 2016, Annales Africaines de Médecine (DR Congo), Rwanda Journal of Medicine, and Sierra Leone Journal of Biomedical Research joined the AJPP partnership project. Within the framework of this partnership (WHO-TDR, CSE-Fogarty-NLM-AJPP), the journal Mali Medical received financial support for equipment, the organization of national and regional scientific writing training workshops in Bamako, and the payment of a monthly allowance for the committee's support staff. The

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following workshops were organized by the Mali Médical editorial board: (i) regional workshops on the critical reading of biomedical manuscripts (2006, 2009), and on scientific writing and publication (2004, (2008), management of a scientific journal (2012), online publication of a journal (2016), (ii) national workshops on scientific writing and publishing (2010, 2015, 2017), and critical reading of biomedical manuscripts (2025). In 2024, thanks to the support of the National Health Insurance Fund (CANAM) of Mali, the journal Mali Medical organized a national workshop on scientific writing and publishing. These training workshops, in addition to the increase in the number of submissions, have significantly improved the quality of publications in Mali Medical.

Upon closer examination, this support is far from sustainable. To ensure at least the survival of the journal, the editorial board introduced, in 2021, in the "Recommendations to Authors of Mali Medical," an increase in submission fees, raising the flat rate from five (5,000) CFA francs to twenty thousand (20,000) CFA francs for manuscripts whose main author resides in Mali and from ten thousand (10,000) to thirty thousand (30,000) CFA francs for those whose main author resides outside Mali. In addition, since 2024, a flat-rate publication fee of twenty-five thousand (25,000) francs has been introduced per article to be published. The impact of these measures is currently being evaluated.

## **Perspectives of Mali Medical**

In addition to the need to consolidate achievements, the Mali Medical journal must play a key role in implementing the following tasks:

- **Manage Mali Medical online from manuscript submission to journal issue publication:**

In fact, within the framework of the AJPP partnership, Mali Medical advocated for a French version of the "ScholarOne Manuscripts" software. This French version of ScholarOne Manuscripts, developed by the Mali Medical editorial team and validated in 2023, is currently being implemented;

- **Develop a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) for each article published in Mali Medical:**

This digital object identifier is a string of numbers, letters, and symbols used to uniquely identify an article or document and assign it a permanent web address (URL). A DOI is therefore comparable to the national identity number (NINA) or social security number of the article you cite: it will always refer to that article, and only that one;

- **Create a regional training center for scientific writing:** Building on the various training workshops organized in different areas of scientific writing and publishing, the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and the Faculty of Pharmacy in Mali have the human resources to run such a center. This center, for example, will allow for the sharing of ethical considerations in scientific research and publication with African writers.

## **Recommendations of the Editorial Committee of Mali Medical**

To provide Mali Medical with the means to achieve these goals and consolidate its achievements, the editorial board of Mali Medical recommends, among other things, that the Malian Medical Society (i) support the active search for sponsors, (ii) ensure the timely payment of membership dues by its members, with an appropriate share being allocated to Mali Médical, and (iii) identify and allocate a dedicated budget line for the Mali Medical journal.

## **Conclusion**

The Mali Medical journal has come a long way. Over five decades, it has proven that, through high-quality scientific publications, research results from Africa can and must be disseminated first and foremost in Africa. Beyond this achievement, Mali Medical has become a key player in promoting teachers and researchers in Africa. Reaching such a level is not an end in itself. Mali Medical's real challenge is to maintain, and even improve its position in, the highly competitive world of publishing.

For the Editorial Board of Mali Médical  
Professor Siaka Sidibe  
Director of Publication

## News



### **Summary Of The Critical Appraisal Workshop For Biomedical Articles Organized By Mali Médical, July 22-25, 2025**

From July 22 to 25, 2025, the journal Mali Medical organized a workshop on the critical appraisal of scientific biomedical manuscripts. This training was aimed at young reviewers of Mali Medical. The workshop was led by the Mali Medical editorial team, supported by professors from the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Pharmacy in Mali. The objective of the workshop was to better equip young reviewers of biomedical manuscripts with critical appraisal skills, with a view to continuously improving the quality of articles published in Mali Medical. It should be noted that the last critical appraisal training at Mali Medical dates back to 2006. Forty regular young reviewers of the Mali Medical journal were able to participate in this workshop as auditors. The topics covered during the workshop were:

- The role of scientific medical communication
- The different types of scientific medical communication
- Reference management software
- The principles of critical reading
- Criteria common to all studies
- Criteria specific to diagnostic evaluation
- Criteria specific to epidemiological studies
- Criteria specific to clinical case studies

Daily practical exercises ensured a thorough understanding of the topics covered.

The workshop was funded through the African Journal Partnership Programme (AJPP) for the October 2024 – September 2025 cycle (some images from the workshop). Given the enthusiasm generated by this workshop, the journal Mali Medical hopes for timely and high-quality evaluations of manuscripts submitted to its editorial board.

Professor Siaka Sidibé  
Director of Publication