

# Publications: Where are we Failing?

Ashok Shyam

There has been an uprising in number of publications in last few years, but almost all of it is due to Medical Council of India regulations that demand publications as a necessary ingredient for promotions in medical college. This has been a two edged weapon, because suddenly clinicians who have never written a single paper in their whole careers were expected to publish multiple papers every year. The rule was made but the essential knowledge and infrastructure development was not provided and clinicians were expected to comply with the rule at all cost. This led to frenzy submissions of sub-standard papers from all across the country. Post graduate students and trainees were asked to produce paper overnight. This led to practices like data exaggerations, plagiarism and fake submissions. Being associated with few journals, I realised that rather than having more good papers from the country, there were more bad papers that were submitted [and at times published]. Should we define this as success or failure?

I believe we are missing the point of publications and research. These are not simply means for promotions or fame, but are something that forms the core of our knowledge. I think this is where we are failing. We are failing to realise that Research is Pursuit of Knowledge for betterment of Patient Care and enrichment of subject of Orthopaedics. We also need to realise that publications are one of the most responsible acts that one is going to perform in his lifetime. Publications will carry our names forever and anything we publish will be added to the knowledge base of orthopaedics. Our publications are also testament to not only our academic character but also our moral standing. With online journals, our publications will be read by many of our peers and our academic and moral standings will be judged by them. Any misconduct at level in publications will have widespread ripples. And more importantly due to online publication, all misconduct will be scrutinised over a period of time by some reader or the other and they will be able to pinpoint the flaw in your published study. The authors should not think that once the article is published, they are free of all responsibilities. The real peer review of an article is only after publication of the article when the whole orthopaedic community can read and comment on it. This is something very few authors realise. In times to come, our publications will be our face to the orthopaedic world and even to our patients. Even after us, the generations of orthopaedic surgeons will judge our integrity based on our publications and Research. We all have to groom this aspect of our understanding and the first step in that would be to realise how important it is and how farfetched the ramifications would be. I think this is the most important aspect in publication where we are failing today [even if we succeed in getting the article published].

I would request all our authors to please think twice before submitting your work for publications. You should ask yourself if the work is genuine and is it written well. Also will publication of your work add significantly to the knowledge base of orthopaedics? Specially be aware of seven sins of publications viz Data manipulation, Falsification, Duplicate manuscripts, Redundant publication, Plagiarism, Author conflicts of interest and Humans use concerns. The senior most member of the author team must read the manuscript and give the final approval along with all the authors. All authors must put themselves in shoes of the reader and judge if the article is suitable from scientific and academic point of view and does the article reflect the sincerity of the authors. Will you like this article to be part of your Legacy or will you like the coming generations to remember you for this work?

Finally all authors must realise that publications are a part of their social, moral and scientific Responsibility and a measure of their integrity. It is the most valuable legacy that we can create and legacy is something that should be taken very very seriously.

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