

Publish and Flourish – Why and How to Write a Manuscript?

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Dear Readers,

Greetings from the Editor's desk!

We often hear the adage "Publish or perish". However, it would be encouraging and less intimidating, especially for our younger colleagues, if we were to remove the negative connotation of this adage and, see it in new light – "Publish and Flourish!"

But, why publish? There is a growing need for publications, varying from academic promotion to having a good CV for securing a promising job to answer a clinical question arising from scientific curiosity. Like any other form of writing, scientific writing is a demanding creative process. It is not merely an act. Writing influences and changes thought. We therefore should be mindful of the quality of the manuscript we write.

The quality of a manuscript depends on the quality of thought or the scientific question. We need to identify the knowledge gap and ask questions that will result in high quality publications. Honesty, integrity and rigor of conduct of the research, and diligence in collecting data are fundamental to generate work of substance.

Well poised hypotheses or questions will help in a well designed study. When coupled with clarity (focus), brevity (avoiding repetition), proper grammar and a lucid style of writing, this will result in a high quality publication. Seldom, original scientific articles need to be longer than 3000 to 3500 words. Adhering to the guidelines of the Journal for formatting the manuscript is helpful.

Some practical tips:

- 1) Perform a thorough literature search and identify the knowledge gap that you intend to answer
- 2) Get all your data sorted out. It's always nice to understand some biostatistics. If not, collaborate with a Statistician if required.
- 3) Keep the Introduction to about 500 words, the Material and Methods to about 1500 words, Results to 500 words, Discussion to about 1000 words
- 4) Write the abstract (about 200 words) after the entire manuscript is completed.
- 5) In general; the questions pertaining to your research should appear in the Abstract, Introduction, and Discussion, and the answers should appear in the Abstract, Results, and Discussion.
- 6) References should derive primarily from peer-reviewed journals, standard textbooks, or well-accepted and stable electronic sources.
- 7) Figures and tables should complement, not duplicate material in the text. They should succinctly present information, which would be difficult to describe in text form.

Happy Writing!

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