Publish–flourish or Perish

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The age-old dictum “publish or perish” has shown way to the present slogan “publish and flourish”. It is no longer a threat but an invite to be joyful. Although literally speaking most are not born writers, writing still comes as a natural instinct to most of us. Writing brings rewards at all levels starting at school levels when one wrote essays, letters, and telegrams as part of the curriculum of language subjects. And the brighter ones go a step ahead and write articles, poems etc. in the school magazines and such were invariably more famous among their peers and often held important designations in the school such as those of editorial secretary. As one moves from school to professional life, many become obsessed with the clinical work and suppress the writer within. The last couple of decades have also seen the boom of social networking sites to such an extent that writing is now largely restricted to putting a post on the social media. Most clinicians now use this portal for expressing their professional thoughts and sharing their wisdom, rather than publishing them. Though the emphasis upon conducting research and scientific writing was never minimized, its purpose has been poorly understood especially by the upcoming generations brought up on social networking tools. As a result, the majority still hesitates to write. One would wish to highlight here the unprecedented importance of scientific writing in today’s era [1–4].

Authorship of a scientific paper is one of the best forms of boost to one’s self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth. It helps the world recognize and appreciate one’s research work. Writing a manuscript “forces” the authors to do an extensive literature search on the topic and helps them gain an in-depth knowledge on the subject. It clarifies doubts in their minds and also raises many questions unanswered about the topic. Many a times, this also form basis for further research.

As responsible members of the surgical and by large the doctor community, it is the responsibility of each one of us to share our knowledge, experiences, observations, and results with our peers. Scientific writing allows one to share their innovations (like development of a new diagnostic tool) and technical advancement (like modification in an existing surgical procedure) with the peers around the world. This in turn helps in creating a reference bank for use by others for future research and eventually improving patient care. As data gathers upon a particular subject, experts are able to categorize them into varying levels of evidence, thus forming the basis of evidence-based research and practice.

Apart from having global responsibilities of a clinician, scientific writing is one of the best boons for one’s curriculum vitae (CV). Scientific publishing acts as a career development tool. Publications add unparalleled value to one’s CV and do translate into better job prospects. The various guiding medical bodies (e.g., Medical Council of India) often mandate minimum number of scientific publications for selection and promotion for various academic posts. The selection board in the corporate sector also prefers individuals with such an experience. This is so because having these criteria often depicts certain worthy personal and professional attributes such as being an avid thinker, more organized, and having capability of forming opinions as well as evaluating one’s own results. It also shows an individual’s preference to share with peers, wanting to read/learn more, stay up to date with latest developments in medical world, and have an academic inclination [3, 4].

It is also said that the number of publications often help in attaining more professional fame and helps in developing professional contacts. This opens a wider arena of conducting medical research. These factors do help in getting research grant both at an individual and institutional level.

Scientific writing also extends its benefits beyond research and authorship. It helps one to improve one’s questioning abilities, and enhances knowledge, as one becomes a reviewer for various journals. It opens doors for becoming editors and editorial heads for reputed journals.

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To sum up, scientific writing promotes knowledge utilization, translation, integration, and application in one's practice. It promotes evidence-based learning, leading to improvement in overall patient care.

*“You might do the best in the world. But nobody will know or benefit until **YOU** tell them”*

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