

PUBLISHING AS A TRAINEE – AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE



“Publish or perish” is a deliberate hyperbole (many brilliant clinicians have had very successful careers without publishing), but it is also true that recently, our publication records are being ever more scrutinised. In an increasingly competitive job market, employers look for a metric against which potential candidates are to be assessed. While it is incredibly difficult to measure clinical acumen or teaching ability reliably and reproducibly, publications give rise to a wealth of internationally standardised metrics (eg, h-index, i10-index) against which employers can rank potential candidates and appraise existing employees. It is for this reason, among others, that having a number of publications under your belt by the time you exit training is becoming increasingly advantageous.

In Australia, my advanced training was heavily project-based with no exams beyond basic training. One advantage of this is that it introduces one to the world of clinical research early in their medical career, teaching the basics of project design and management that will be invaluable later. I have been fortunate to have inspirational mentors who not only have impressive publication records, but also possess the desire to nurture the learning needs of a trainee. Producing research of a publishable standard is not an insignificant undertaking; it is important to identify a reliable supervisor to ensure that the work you are planning is

addressing an important question in a focused and feasible manner, and that your contribution will be recognised. Inexperience in the absence of appropriate guidance often leads to a project that sets out to answer everything and ends up answering nothing. My mentors have helped guide my projects and also identified publishing opportunities that may not be immediately obvious. For example, there are journals that cater towards case reports, quality improvement projects, educational articles and study protocols that we can consider publishing in as well. While publishing your projects or cases may seem an onerous task on top of existing commitments as a trainee, the rewards later on justify those extra hours by helping you stand out from the crowd.

It is also worth being mindful of the fact that the medicine we have learnt and the treatments we receive when sick are the combined efforts of generations of researchers. There is a great sense of reward for contributing to the body of medical literature from which we have spent a significant part of our lives studying. Through research, you will gain deeper insight into the processes supporting evidence-based clinical practice and contribute to the translation of novel research findings to improved patient care. ♦

PROFILE



TEXT BY

DR JAMES MOLTON

Dr James Molton is an associate consultant in Infectious Diseases and Advanced Internal Medicine at National University Hospital (NUH). He graduated from the University College Medical School in London and later completed specialist training in Australia. He completed the final year of his training in an RACP accredited training position at NUH, where he is now project lead for five research studies.