

## Publications and Medical Teachers

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Publication is an integral part of career of any Medical Teacher not only in India but across the globe too. Here, I will focus mainly from Indian Teaching Scenario. There are many workshops being conducted in India regarding writing a scientific paper. There are so many lectures being taken stressing the importance of publications for any Medical Teacher. Still, the ground reality is very different and much away from the truth.

Why a Medical teacher should publish? This is an important question raised by many teachers. They say we are doing so much of good work and serving the community. Then why the insistence of publications for us? Yes, I agree that we have so many talented teachers and doctors in our country who are doing a fabulous job of good clinical practice and serve their patients in their community.

But kindly remember that just doing good is sometimes not sufficient. We also need to document what we do. We also need to know what all things we have done and what more can we offer. This is only possible when one keeps a record of his/her daily practice and patient care.

This culture of imbibing the importance of such documentation is not really well grown in India so far unfortunately. It has to be taught initially in early stage of career for any medical teacher and doctor but later on it should become the second nature for an individual teacher and doctor. One needs to feel it from within that I should publish and it should not be done by an external force.

I strongly believe in this point. Unless you document it will be very difficult to introspect

what we are doing really. Are we doing enough good for our patients and students or can we do much more than that? The answer to this question is only possible when one is doing documentation and subsequently the publication of our own records over the time.

It acts like a mirror for us which reflects to us our true face of good work that one has done plus our strength and also a potential to grow further which will benefit the community and the future generation of students.

Our Medical Council of India (MCI) [1] which is now reconstituted as National Medical Commission (NMC) [2] in 2019 has always made publications mandatory for Medical Teachers in order to facilitate teacher's career progress and promotion. But many teachers have taken it as more of a compulsion than necessity.

This is unfortunate. Why the regulatory body needs to make such thing mandatory which is useful for one's own growth because many teachers are not aware of documentations and importance of publications? We all follow literature and books mainly written by Western Authors and Scholars. Have we asked ourselves where have they emerged from? Their only plus point was they were very meticulous in documentations and subsequently leading into publications.

They published numerous case reports and research papers based on their observations which has changed the course of health journey of mankind. If they had not done so

where we would have been today? Think about it. So, its very important that one needs to document every small good thing one does and then compile and then publish it as and when possible. This should be our trend and this should come automatically and not by force from regulatory bodies like NMC.

This practice of jotting down small notes and doing documentation is learnt right from the beginning in the school and junior colleges and not just in the Medical Colleges [3].

We take pictures of an event. Why? Because first we want its memory with us and second, we can revisit it after years when we remember about it and correlate it with any current event happening. This is the simplest example of documentation and record keeping which we all do without much of an insight or a teaching for it. Similarly, we can do notes writing and documentations which will help us gather the necessary data based on which we can write a scientific paper and publish the same eventually.

Many ask gathering the data and record keeping is fine but why insistence on publishing? [4] The art of publication is very fascinating and self-evolving as one will progress on it. Unless you publish your data and others appreciate or criticize it how will you know that the data you have is really useful to others or not? Had Edison kept all observations of his with himself and did not publish a single paper out of it what loss the world would have suffered? Think about it.

You can be tomorrow's Edison for future generations but you need to know about this and believe in yourself. So, in simple words '*publish or perish*'. Again, his publication should be done by your internal choice and not by any external force or compulsion which will then become as '*publish and flourish*' for you.

Hence, try writing down small one-page observations then show it to your colleagues or

seniors and take their inputs on it (this is the process of validation of your results). Once approved by them and you are satisfied about it take the necessary approvals from Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) which is also called sometimes as Institutional Review Board (IRB) when your study involves human subjects and interventions and after their suggestions and approvals start and methodically complete your study and once its completed try to publish it in a peer reviewed journal.

Now, this actual process of publication can be at times lengthy depending upon the journal's review board but do not lose hope and go on improving by following their suggestions and guidance. There are various research ethics which one needs to follow while publishing your data. One can easily master the art of publication by observing and talking to seniors in your department who can guide you very well.

Once you publish your first research paper the joy cannot be expressed in words. It gives you a sense of satisfaction and a stimulus for your further publications and growth. I promise, you won't look back again and go on writing many more interesting case reports and research papers which will not only help you in your career growth and promotion but will set an example for your juniors to follow too. Important is emphasize on quality and not quantity.

Kindly remember that this publication of yours will not only help you to grow as a better teacher, educator and doctor but will also benefit the community immensely too and when all do such publications spontaneously there is no need for NMC to put any more stringent rules [5] for this as it has become a second nature for any Medical Teacher in India.

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