

Knowledge Is Power

Leonard Azamfirei, *Editor-in-Chief*

University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Tirgu Mures, Romania

When Sir Francis Bacon published in his work, *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), the saying: “*knowledge itself is power*”, he most likely wanted to transmit the idea that having and sharing knowledge is the cornerstone of reputation and influence, and therefore power; all achievements emanate from this. Today, scientific knowledge is shared through publications that not only inform, but have the capacity to influence decision making.

The Journal of Critical Care Medicine, a publication of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Tirgu Mures, Romania launched in 2015, was recently included in the *Master Journal List of the Emerging Sources Citation Index* (ESCI), which is part of the Thomson Reuters Web of Science Core Collection. This new index ensures the indexing of high-quality medical articles that undergo a specific peer-review process prior to publication. The inclusion of the journal in this international database ensures a larger and more consistent international profile, as well as a probable increase in the citation of published articles.

Is the inclusion of a medical journal in ISI Web of Science a purpose in itself?

Academic evaluation criteria quantify, among other things, the number and quality of scientific papers published in high-impact journals (usually ISI indexed) as a numerical value of scientific performance through scientometric and personal citing indexes (Hirsch index). On the other hand, medical journals exist to be read and cited. The rigor of the peer review process is crucial to ensure a high standard of scientific quality. The acceptance of an article for publication in such a journal is confirmation of its scientific recognition and value of the reported research.

In an academic system that has a relatively small number of journals included in Web of Science, the inclusion of a medical journal into this elite group is an important event in itself. Furthermore it offers potential contributors, motivated by their scientific voca-

tion or interest in academic promotion, an opportunity to publish in an internationally highly regarded and respected journal. For these reasons, this journal can be perceived for many, as a purpose in itself and as a solution to the difficult problem of having their work published.

An academic system that overestimates the value of the quantity of papers published by an individual, without paying attention to quality, will put pressure on medical journals who are still in the process of establishing their status a quality publication.

Naturally, a remarkable medical professional, a keen clinician, or a professor fully involved in didactic activity will have a reduced chance of becoming a reputed researcher, than someone for whom the evident form of research activity, publishing, comes as a natural consequence.

For that reason, some academic systems have disconnected the title of Clinical Professor from that of Research professor. The persistence of the academic model, in which physician-scientists are involved in clinical practice, teach and monitoring students as well as endeavouring to conduct high calibre research, can become a „triple threat” [1], especially when academic institutions prioritizes the research element to the detriment of the other two components. This situation demoralizes the physician-scientists and can push him towards committing frank exploitation [2].

Can medical research be performed by physicians or only by researchers?

Medical science tries to find answers to questions regarding both the normal and abnormal functioning of the human organism. Whether we are talking about basic science, translational science, knowledge translation, clinical science or population research, if the results of this research does not lead to an improvement in the understanding of a disease, whether at a diagnostic, treatment or preventive level, the social objective of medical research is not fulfilled [3].

In biomedical research, the contemporary model is that of a physician-scientist who must master different types of research: cross-sectional studies, case-control studies, cohort studies, clinical trials and systematic reviews. Successfully treating a patient is, without doubt, a great satisfaction, but it is equally significant to influence the lives of thousands of patients through research.

Publication can draw attention to the scientific performance of the individual or the institution to which it belongs and it can also serve as a mechanism to attract funds necessary for research. However, when academic pressure to publish at any cost is exaggerated, the risk of low-quality scientific papers increases [4]. The compulsion to publish became an overriding obligation for both the individual and universities. This is appropriate as long as quantity does not prevail in the face of quality. More edifying for a researcher, is the impact of a study evidenced by the number of citations, rather than by the number of studies published. Thousands of articles, after being published accrue no citations, they remain unread by anyone. And that leads to the question: *Qui prodest?*

What is next?

All medical journals need to be aware of and address some inherent risks:

1. Scientific misconduct – the consequence of competition, need to publish, careerism among scientists;
2. Unjustified co-authorship – multiple authorship can be acceptable in interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaborations, but it becomes unjustified when it takes the form of gift-authorship or authorship out of courtesy or reciprocity;
3. Salami-slicing publications – publishing multiple papers based on the same study, with the minimum of information necessary for publishing – smallest publishable unit;
4. Data augmentation – extending an existing article with minimal additional added data, usually without cross-references [5];

The Journal of Critical Care Medicine will adopt and apply best practice in publishing ethics, by accepting the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) to which it applied and is awaiting membership decision.

The intention to become a regional leader in this area of scientific publication is the objective of the Editorial Board and represents an important part of its editorial policy. A significant stage, the inclusion of the journal in an elite publishing group, has ended in success.

The most important part, recognition and confirmation of its high ideals and status, is yet to come.

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