

Editorial

Medical Writing

“A naturalist’s life would a happy one if he had to observe and never to write”

Charles Darwin

Medical writing is the most challenging and creative aspect of medical communication. Possible avenues of expression range from a brief letter to the editor to case studies, review articles, research papers, or even textbooks.

Scientific writing is not literary writing. Literary writing is an art... an art in which style often means ornamentation, non-grammatical constructions are often deliberately used for effect, and multiple meanings are not only accepted, but encouraged. In scientific writing, style centers not on ornamentation, but on the smooth transfer of ideas. The best scientific grammar is the simplest, and each word must have only one meaning. Scientific writing is less an art than a craft... not always an easy craft to learn, but one well within the capabilities of almost any scientific researcher [1].

The task of editorial committee is even more difficult and stressful. They have to go through all types of writings to produce a useful journal. This requires lot of effort to satisfy both writers as well as readers. This is quite tricky as the editors are under tremendous pressure to remain impartial. While editing an interesting well presented manuscript is emotionally satisfying and intellectually stimulating, a badly presented write-up which is un-interesting can lead to severe headache with the result that one would keep it pending [2].

I must acknowledge the hard work of editorial committee of Pakistan Armed Forces Medical Journal (PAFMJ) who have not only been producing the journal regularly but also improving its quality. The PAFMJ has gone through various stages of evolution and now it has turned a very important milestone by becoming a quarterly medical journal. Not an easy job! It will put an extra burden on the editorial committee as well as on the overburdened clerical staff. I am sure that they will face this challenge. There next target should be making this journal a monthly journal and to get it indexed in Index Medicus.

One must ask himself why to put so much effort in publishing a journal. Why not subscribe to so many local journals which are available? The answer is very simple. This is our own journal. It provides us with sense of pride when we see it in libraries. It is like wearing our own uniform rather than wearing borrowed clothes. We must make a concerted effort to improve our journal.

References

1. Matthews JR. Bowen JM and Mathews RW. Successful scientific writing. Cambridge University press UK 1998; p.3.
2. Jawaid SA. What editors demand and what authors want to know. Professional medical publications. Karachi 2003; p.9.

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