

Foreword

Scientific writing is an art compared to other forms of writing as it is based on scientific process. The cold facts have to be presented in a logical fashion so that readers can learn and interpret studies. A scientific study has to be expressed clearly and avoid ambiguity. “The fundamental purpose of scientific discourse is not the presentation of information and thought, but rather its actual communication. It does not matter how pleased an author might be to have converted all the right data into sentences and paragraphs; it matters only whether a large majority of the reading audience accurately perceives what the author had in mind.” (Gopen and Swan, 1990)

There is no provision for medical writing in our undergraduate curriculum. The postgraduate programs require publication of research papers and thesis while no instructions module is available as part of curriculum.

The multi authorship of the book is an advantage and provides broad vision. The guide covers all aspects of scientific writing including original article, review article, case reports, short communications and letter to editor. It also covers writing personal memoirs and conference proceedings. Statistical methods have been given due consideration. It may need further expansion with examples in future addition of the book. An important aspect missing in this book is regarding proper use of English language including words phrases tense and how to be concise.

Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawaid has continued his efforts with missionary zeal to promote medical writing and medical journalism. This book on scientific writing and publication is timely. The research culture is slowly being ingrained in our curriculum and medical careers.

This is in contrast to an earlier publication in NATURE (Vol. 376 24 August 1995) with a title “Imprisoning the beams of the Sun. Science remains low on Pakistan’s list of political priorities. Money and management both seem to be in a short supply except for nuclear energy which has benefited at the expense of other research fields.”

In the same article following were the selected science indicators for Pakistan, based on information provided by Institute for scientific information: for clinical medicine the total numbers of papers in clinical medicine were 227 with 0.04 share of world authorship and 0.50 citation per paper. We have come a long way since then with increase in number of published papers and citation index.

This book is valuable addition to literature on medical writing and it will go a long way to further increase credibility of scientific literature from Pakistan. I express my deep gratitude to all the contributors for their hard work.

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