



Editorial

Publishing honestly

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The foremost question that comes to mind is what constitutes academic dentistry? It comprises of three distinct but interrelated themes: educating budding doctors, discovering etiology and cures of a multitude of diseases and improving the quality of patient care. It has also previously been described as “the capacity of the system to for health and health care to think, study, research, discover, evaluate, innovate, teach learn and improve.”¹

Doctors in an academic setting not only play the role of a clinician, but also of an teacher, administrator, mentor, researcher & examiner. However, their most significant roles are that of a clinician, followed by a teacher and at higher levels of duties being actively involved in doctoral research. Thus, the doctor is managing two full time responsibilities which lay huge demands on time and energy. While practicing in an academic institution a doctor must exemplify the highest standards of patient care, this involves both the art and science of dentistry. They must lead by example so that their students absorb their skills and qualities. As a teacher, nurturing research is also their responsibility. Once clinically relevant is carried out, disseminating its message also holds importance.

Scientific publications are not a new phenomenon. It started in 1600s and led the correspondence between doctors and scientific community, since then with the explosion of information technology and desktop processing, there are currently over 10,000 dental and allied sciences

periodicals. However, the dictum has always been to effectively communicate the progress in dentistry amongst doctors, researchers and the public at large. In the current environment, it is also a medium to gain approval amongst peers and gain “tenure” or promotion.

The main reasons for publications may be listed as follows: disseminating new research, enhancing personal repertoire, recognition for a department/ university/ research team, and most notably contribute towards enhanced patient care by widening the existing evidence base. Moe et al.,² have summarized these points using the S.U.L.T.A.N. acronym which includes:

1. S – Study requirement to obtain a degree.
2. U – Requirement for University jobs, promotions, salary increments.
3. L – Long term sustainability of an academic career.
4. T – Achieving Top Rank positions.
5. A – Advancement of health, education and economic policies.
6. N – Name and fame amongst peer group and community.

To all of the above, another point that can be added is financial reward. It is well-known that a well published researcher stands a greater chance of receiving grants and collaborations with other institutes and research teams. It also extends to the author being invited to present their findings at conferences and symposiums, further

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contributing to their professional growth and improving leadership positions.^{3,4}

The current milieu of “publish or perish” has put great pressure on academic doctors to publish frequently often leading to unsavory results.^{5,6} The expectations from researchers/ academic doctors to generate high quality research content but also uncompromising honesty has now led to a “publish or be ethical” dilemma.⁷ Scientific publication misconduct is seriously frowned upon and the academic community now has an organized response system such as courses for academicians accused of research misconduct and redaction of published article and citations.⁸

Academic publications are vital for the progress and practice of dentistry; it is important to add to one's *curriculum vitae*, increase peer recognition. Through this editorial, we would like to communicate to entry and mid-level academicians to not succumb to accruing points and resort to methods that would constitute professional misconduct. Self integrity must be upheld especially in context to academic dentistry.

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2. Conflict of Interest

None.

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