

## **Publish or Perish, Publish and Perish**

Dear Reader,

One of the most important responsibilities of a scientist is to disseminate knowledge and experience, be it theoretical, preclinical or clinical, as quickly as possible to the community so that science can excel. One way to achieve this goal is to publish research findings and observations. Certainly, in the academic environment, such activities are also considered as a category of metrics for promotion that should primarily be considered as an indication of recognition and contribution of that individual to science.

The mantra “Publish or Perish” has been always a kind of driving force or motivation for scientists to write their significant findings. It is hard work, and entails time and dedication. One can also argue that this phrase has been partially associated with perpetuating the existence of the author(s) in scientific history for many years to come. Yet, in the information age, as a consequence of a dramatic increase in the pace of information transfer, inflation in the number of journals, congresses, and courses i.a., the half-life of information is being just as rapidly diminished; we barely have time to digest the produced information. Also, times have changed – today, instead of solo work, more collaborative work is being pursued, resources are shared worldwide and joint efforts are being made to reach scientific goals, i.e., to solve existing problems. The downside of more people being involved in science, and thus more information being created, is that the thorough and critical evaluation of produced work in the peer review process will suffer. Thus, at this point, our priority should

be to perform high quality, original, visionary science targeting clinical problems, in the hope that today’s clinical problems will not be present in the future, and today’s solutions will not in turn create other problems.

The counterproductive flip side of “Publish or Perish” is “Publish and Perish”. The pressure and temptation is great to publish repetitions of confirmatory work, but this should be avoided, as it ultimately only adds to the intellectual tangle in which authors will inevitably perish, perhaps much quicker than they could imagine. What we urgently need is to develop better knowledge management systems and increase the quality of peer review; otherwise, much redundant information will be propagated, merely consuming resources instead of solving problems.

The quote by Andy Warhol “In the future, everybody will be famous for 15 minutes” will probably hold true for dental science too. In fact, what is most important is to deliver sound science, and honest, good clinical observations to the next generations. Sound, careful work will be appreciated for a longer time and – although nothing and no one lasts forever – have a more lasting impact.

Sincerely yours,



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*This reprint from Brazilian Dental Science, 2014;17(1):1-3 (website: ojs.ict.unesp.br) has been language edited.*