

4th National Medical Writing Skills Workshop

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Scientific medical writing is important in the advancement of the medical field such as the understanding of diseases processes, development and testing of new tests and treatments. Scientific writing allow important findings of research, interesting observations or rare condition and even not previously reported observations of common condition to be reported in the literature and hence disseminating such important information to the wider healthcare communities worldwide. Such information may improve of understanding and impact the management of the many medical disorders. With the dawn of the age of the worldwide web, such information can be disseminated to every corners of the world with ease and speed. Therefore, it is our duty and obligation as healthcare professionals to report any interesting findings that we come across in our daily practice or academic pursuit. However, scientific research and writing may not be suited for everyone (i.e. hold little interest for some, little knowledge or experience or too busy with other commitments to conduct research and write scientifically).

Scientific medical writing is not easy and has to be learnt and perfected into an art. Learning

how to write in the past has been through guidance of colleagues, typically seniors colleagues who has previously published and attending the few medical writing workshops that are being conducted. As such, medical writing tend to be a thing of academic centres. However, with the current trend of including research output in the annual appraisal and also linkage of smaller health institutions such as district general hospitals to large academic centres, research now is also becoming important in smaller centres. In Brunei Darussalam, health institutions have been and are still service oriented and little time for research. Similar to what is happening elsewhere, research is now becoming a part for the vision of the Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam. Several factors have contributed to this; setting of the medical school, the Pengiran Anak Puteri Rasidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah (PAPRSB), Institute of Health Sciences (previously known as the Institute of Medicine), Universiti Brunei Darussalam in 2000, inclusion of research output into the annual appraisal, setting up of the Medical Health and Research Ethic Committee (MHREC) and Clinical Research Unit (CRU), Ministry of Health Brunei Darussalam, and in part increasing number of doctors who are interested and have been involved with

research during training.

Writing workshop is a good way to learn about medical writing and there are now increasingly more workshops organised, either at the local, national, regional or international levels. To date, there have been four National Writing Skills Workshop conducted in Brunei Darussalam, supplemented by several single day workshops concentrating on the various aspects of research and medical writing. The national writing workshop have been conducted in collaboration between the CRU, Ministry of Health with the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME). The first of such workshop was held on the 29th and 30th May 2010. The topics covered all aspects of medical writing; types of articles (Editorial, Review, Original articles, Case reports and Letters to the editor), structures of articles (IMRaD; Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, and Discussion), choosing the titles, authors listing (including authorship and acknowledgement), writing a good abstract and introduction (the three paragraphs rule or guide), presenting results, writing a structured discussion, and even writing and choose the referencing style appropriate to journals. The workshops also covered topics on how submitted manuscripts are processed, what the editors and reviewers look for and dealing with their comments (i.e. revision of manuscripts). There were also talks on the MHREC, CRU and the Brunei International Medical Journal (available online at www.bimjonline.com). All the subsequent workshops including the latest (4th National Writing Skills Workshop) covered the same topics with the exception of an addition of a half day reviewers' workshop in the 3rd National Writing Skills Workshop; 10th to 12th May 2013). For the reviewers' workshop, only those who have previously published or reviewed for journals were invited to participate. Topics covered in the reviewers' workshops included; roles and responsibilities of reviewers, issues on plagiarisms, conflict of interest, disclosures, pros and cons of opened or blinded (single or double blind) reviews, reuse of materials (such as images), multiple reporting of interesting cases by different subspecialties and paying for

publication (the increasingly popular Open Access models). Included in the 4th workshop was a referencing workshop. Participants were taught how to use referencing software when preparing a manuscript for publication. They were also taught on how to search for references in PubMed, using effective search MeSH (Medical Subject Heading) listed keywords. This session included a work exercise.

All the workshops had been conducted by two invited speakers from the APAME (Prof. Wilfred Peh and Prof. Jose Lapena and Prof Ng [the first workshop only]) in collaborations with local speakers.

The 4th National Writing Skill Workshop, The previous three workshops as well as the latest one were well received and attended, and all participants found the workshop useful. These workshops have produced results with some participants having gone to publish their work in either local, regional or international journals, general or specialty based journals. Despite the success of the workshops, the increase in the number of publications as result of the workshops is small. The 4th National Writing Skill Workshop, The previous three workshops as well as the latest one were well received and attended, and all participants found the workshop useful. These workshops have produced results with some participants having gone to published their work in either local, regional or international journals, general or specialty based journals. Despite the success of the workshops, the increase in the number of publications as result of the workshops is small.

The number of publications from Brunei, although small compared to other countries is increasing based on PubMed search. The main reasons for the increase include; collaborations between healthcare professionals and the medical school (PAPRSB, Institute of Health Science, Universiti Brunei Darussalam) and continued increase by healthcare professionals working with the Ministry of Health and works by the academicians from the university. Collaborations with the medical school

involve medical students who are required to carry out research projects as part of their second and third years curriculum (SSM2 and SSM3). The projects can be hospital or community based. Some of the projects have been published either in local, regional or international peer reviewed journals.

There is currently no workshop scheduled for 2015 due to dwindling enthusiasm, expected after the workshop has ran for several years. This may be due to the fact that those who are interested in research and scientific writing have already attended the workshop, either the previous years or workshops abroad. However, with the increase in the number of juniors doctors joining the service,

in particular the Foundation Years (FY) doctors and the push for research to be part of training requirement, future writing workshops will be conducted. Currently, FY doctors are required to conduct audits as part of the FY curriculum. Currently, there the Basic Specialty Training (BST) in Medicine is being planned and this will include requirement to carry out audits. Hopefully, this will be extended to include research and requirement of publications to fulfill training requirement. Such training in the early years of their medical professions will hopefully instill interest in research and scientific writing among the future generations of doctors and healthcare professionals in Brunei Darussalam.

