



# Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research

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## Editorial:

### Turning a Master or Thesis into publications

I am honoured to be working with Professor Somchit Hanucharunkul, the Board Members of Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council, and the Editorial Board and Reviewers of the *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*. Hopefully my work in helping authors, new and experienced, will result in the growth and development of this important Journal.

In my experience in journal editing and reviewing, I have found that there are great research in nursing and developments going on across the Asia-Pacific Rim region. However, many nurses are daunted by the prospect of writing in a second language at an international standard, or getting their work rejected for various reasons. Many complain they don't have enough time, but if you have a deadline imposed by someone to do something, you usually achieve this, right? So, set yourself a deadline to submit your manuscript and keep to it. As I often tell new authors, anything that is worth a great challenge often has a great goal. Many nurses are indeed being successful in getting published but others need much encouragement and self-talk, and also publication strategies.

Just last week I met with three PhD students trying to summarise their whole thesis studies into one manuscript. My advice to them was to divide up their work into two or three manuscripts. It is often impossible in only 4,000–5,000 words to provide sufficient writing depth and quality information about a large thesis study. Often such studies are the largest that many nurses will undertake in their lives. And you need to do justice to that study and disseminate your findings well so that it can be read by others in a way that can help them translate your findings into practice.

Writing a journal article is not just something that happens overnight. It takes time. We can all write, but writing for journals is in a different context to writing PhD or master thesis, or a research report, or a report about a quality assurance evaluation. So I want to share a few tips with those of you finishing off your higher degree or have just graduated:

1. Learning to write for international publication means that you have to pay attention to detail, especially of journal guidelines, and doing a lot of drafting and re-drafting.
2. You need, with help, to choose the right audience for your publication. Who do you want to read your article(s)? Find someone who can mentor you, and look at the aim and scope of a journal in its information sections to see whether your study will fit in it.
3. Learn the 'rules of the game' about publishing. Just like driving a car or learning to dance, there are rules and methods that you have to learn and acquire. The best way to start is with a strategy. Write down the things you need to find out about publishing before you start, look at publications about writing, or go to a writing workshop. See the free online journal about writing at <http://www.nurseauthoreditor.com/> and download the publication by Webb<sup>1</sup>, or read the recent book on writing by Holland & Watson.<sup>2</sup>

4. Discuss with your advisors and co-authors about how many manuscripts you will write from your thesis. What sets of research questions, data, discussion and conclusions will go into which manuscript? Research methods sections might be similar for the manuscripts. Remember, you cannot cut and paste the same data or written paragraphs from one journal manuscript to another. This will breach copyright, even though the manuscripts are your work! Don't cut your research into too many 'thin' sections or slices when trying to get as many publications as possible. We call this 'salami slicing' in the world of publications. Each manuscript, with a different title, should stand alone as a substantial piece of scholarship.
5. ALL co-authors must contribute to the writing of a manuscript and review it before each submission. However, if you are first author then the major responsibility is yours.
6. Follow the journal guidelines (I am ALWAYS repeating this because many would-be authors don't do this and then wonder why their manuscript was rejected or had major revisions!).
7. Look at articles in the journal you have chosen to help you structure the manuscript, and to understand the depth and quality of writing you need to do.
8. Update your references to include any gaps from when you first wrote your literature review for your thesis. Editors often like it if you also reference one or two relevant articles from the journal because this shows that you have been interested in looking at the journal content, and it may also help with the impact factor of the journal.
9. Divide up your thesis literature review so that there is a different and relevant review for each manuscript. When you write your manuscript literature review, start with international perspectives, then national and local perspectives, for example when giving statistics about a health problem or describing studies on your research topic. International readers are looking for relevance to their own practice in their country and you need to locate your local study and your country within an international context to improve world health or practice.
10. If your English writing is not good, get the manuscript edited before you submit.
11. Ask someone outside of the research team to review your research descriptions and statistics. Remember at least two experts will be asked to review your manuscript by the editor.
12. Finally, if you have a graduation deadline and need to get acceptance for a manuscript, don't leave it to the last minute to submit your manuscript to a journal. Reviewing and decision-making can take several months before acceptance. Whilst editors might try to be accommodating, they have many publication pressures and your last minute work is not their problem. It's yours! Don't wait until your thesis is finished: start writing early!

Best wishes to all of you with your writing endeavours and keep supporting this great Journal. Start writing now!

**Sue Turale, DEd, RN, FACN, FACMHN**

**Editor**

## REFERENCES

1. Webb C. Writing for publication. Blackwell Publications; (Cited 7 March, 2013). Available: from: <http://www.nurseauthoreditor.com/WritingforPublication2009.pdf>
2. Holland C, Watson R. Editors. Writing for publication in nursing and healthcare: Getting it right. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell; 2012.