

# Guest Editorial

## Education, Research and Practice in Nursing: Disseminating Knowledge in Journals, Internationally and Nationally

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### **Hello Readers,**

I am sure you will enjoy this issue of *The Journal of Nursing Sciences* which showcases some fine scholarship from nurses working in education, research and clinical practice. Faculty of Nursing, Mahidol University and the wider university can be proud of the ongoing development of scholarship that is displayed by the work of the authors in this Journal. Not only in Bangkok, but across Thailand, I have observed the great strides that the profession of nursing is making in education, research, and practice areas to improve people's health. A lot of people that I speak with about this development also tell me that the range and quality of Thai nursing journals has improved significantly from former years. These journals, as well as newsletters, various media, the Internet, and newer technologies, are important avenues helping to disseminate research findings and practice innovations across the country. It is vital that the great work that nurses in this country is also shared

with the outside world. More Thai nurses are writing in international journals and speaking at conferences, but this is often still a difficult exercise for many as English is not their first language. However, I have found that the struggles that nurses in this country have to write for publication are mirrored in the experiences of many other nurses around the world. So please remember that this is not something that you alone are challenged with.

Many nurses are often concerned about developing the skills of writing for publication, whether in their own language or in English internationally. So I want to mention just a few important points here. Skill development in writing for publication requires strategic planning, close attention, and a variety of strategies to be successful. Firstly, novice authors need help from more experienced authors to guide their writing. Graduate students and clinicians are not the only ones who

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struggle to write for publication; even well educated-senior academics and managers need assistance with their early writing for publication in journals. Writing in a thesis or in an assignment or report is very different to writing for journal publication to writing a journal manuscript. You have to write in a different context with a different set of rules. One strategy is to look for a mentor to help you write, whether that person is in your profession or outside of it. We all need mentors at different stages of life in different situations, so too in writing for publication. Inviting an experienced author of journal articles from your own speciality to be a co-author on your first few articles, can be very helpful, but of course they need to make a significant contribution to a manuscript to be added as co-author.

Whether writing in Thai journals or highly competitive international journals, it is also very important that you decide who is going to be the audience of your writing. This means choosing the right journal to get your messages and findings across to the key people. Choosing the wrong journal, by not clearly reading its aims and scope, or understanding its quality of distribution, can result in rejection of your article, or poor dissemination of your scholarship.

In my experiences as an editor-in-chief, I have often found that would-be authors do not clearly read and attend to all of the guidelines of a journal. This is critical if you want to get published. If you do not address each guideline well, then you will either get a letter of rejection, or the reviewing or publication process can be lengthened significantly. Make a plan of action about what you need to know before you begin writing. Do not waste time and effort writing a journal

manuscript and then looking for a journal to submit it to. This is back to front! Another useful strategy is to write down the headings and sub-headings that are needed for a particular journal article, before you write the actual text. Next to these put in the number of words that might be required, for example, 'Abstract (180 words), Key words (five), References (no more than 40)'. This strategy will help ensure you include all of the important sections of a manuscript and keep to the word limits in your writing.

Keep the guidelines for authors for the journal you are writing for close to hand at all times during the writing process, as well as a few articles from the journal that use the same methods or are written on the same topic. These will help you to decide on the quality and depth of writing you need for each section of the manuscript. Pay very careful attention to grammar/ punctuation, and use the spell checker on your computer constantly. Other important points are to get someone to check your writing before submission, and to ask someone outside of the research team with expertise in your methodologies, to check your research analyses.

Skill development in writing can also be enhanced by reading about how to write for publication, or attending workshops especially for this purpose. For example, **nurseauthoreditor.com** is the website of a free online journal especially for nurses who are learning to write, for those reviewing manuscripts for journals, or those like me who are editors. Simply register on the website by putting in a user name and password, and you can have access to a range of articles on different aspects of publication. On this website you can also download a free publication

from Wiley-Blackwell on writing for publication. This is a useful general guide for novice writers. However, remember that this guide should be considered as supplementary reading; you should always follow the author guidelines for journal you are writing for.

Another point is that collected data in research publications often will be refused publication if it is more than five years old, so remember to set yourself a

deadline to submit a manuscript. Otherwise you might keep putting off finishing a manuscript and fail to disseminate your hard work.

These are just a few publication tips that I hope are useful to you. Keep practicing your writing, and I am sure you will meet with success. This activity is vital to help improve education, research and practices in nursing nationally and internationally.