

# When we should start writing and publishing an article in the health domain

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## Abstract

For novice researchers within the health domain it would be absolutely essential to determine when they should start writing and publishing an article based on their recent research project. There are plenty of reasons which justify writing an article as soon as the necessary data are gathered and analyzed. The aim of the present article is to discuss some of these most important rationales.

**Key words:** Scientific paper, writing, publishing, health domain

## Introduction

Recently the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology (JCE) has published a series of short but fascinating articles on "effective writing and publishing of scientific papers" for "novice academic researchers" (1). The series consists of 12 consecutive papers beginning from: "how to get started" (2) and finishing by: "responding to reviewers" (3). I have found the series very useful especially when I teach novice health researchers in research methodology workshops (4).

My personal experiences also show that for novice researchers it would be absolutely necessary to know when they should start writing and publishing an article based on their recent research project. Unfortunately, evidence suggests that from one hand "time shortages", "continuing study", "problems with co-authors" and "negative results" might totally deter researchers from writing and publishing their results (5). On the other hand however, there are plenty of other vital reasons which justify writing and publishing an article as soon as the necessary data are gathered and analyzed (6). Therefore, the aim of the present article is to discuss some of these most important rationales.

### The most important rationales

**1.** As scientists who work within the health domain it is our responsibility to communicate our new findings as soon as possible (6). Let us imagine that you have new findings regarding the application of a new device or a new drug, etc. It would be absolutely vital to communicate these findings to inform your colleagues and public at large, since your new findings have the potential to save lives or bring amelioration of symptoms in sick people.

2. The second reason which justifies on time publication of new findings is that nowadays different teams of scientists around the world work on rather similar issues. Therefore, if you deliberately delay the publications of your new findings, your colleagues might reach very similar results and publish their findings sooner than you (6). As a result you simply lose your position as a pioneer in your field of expertise.

3. Similar to the previous point, any deliberate delays in publications of new findings put them in danger of becoming old. Nowadays the rate of new research is constantly increasing and we witness huge progress in the health domain, the results of which are published daily. Recently, it has been estimated that more than 5,500 biomedical articles are published on a daily basis (7). Therefore, any intentional long delays in publications would change new findings into old findings.

4. The fourth reason which justifies punctual publication of new findings is that usually editors and reviewers of your manuscript might ask for some revisions. They might even ask for further analyses to be carried out. Therefore, when you write your manuscript as soon as finishing your research project you are fresh enough to carry out more analyses or undertake extra work (6).

5. The final reason which justifies publication of new findings is that you as a biomedical scientist need to promote your career and get funded for your further research. It is only by having a good record on publications especially within the prestigious journals, that you will be able to fulfill this.

## Conclusions

For novice researchers within the health domain it would be absolutely essential to realize that they should start writing an article based on their recent research project as soon as possible. The present article provides its reader with five important reasons which justify writing an article as soon as the necessary data are gathered and analyzed. Nonetheless, it is worth emphasizing that on time publications by no means should force scientists to undermine the integrity of research. Similarly, the necessity of having a good record on publications by no means should compel them to breach the ethics of scientific publications (9).

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