

GUEST EDITORIAL

Addressing the Global “So What”: How Can We Improve the Production and Dissemination of Work With International Applicability Which Links Research, Education, and Practice

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The INANE (International Academy of Nursing Editors Annual Meeting) conference in Portland, Maine, USA, on August 4-6, 2014, was anything but inane. Prominent authors, editors, and publishers came together to discuss many issues including impact factors, open access, article metrics, timely and efficient publication, and narrative and reflective strategies for authors. For editors and authors Laima Karosas, Karen Myrick, and Olga Riklikienė, the challenge was to address the applicability of research, education, and practice beyond the country of origin. We presented the poster “Addressing the Global ‘So What’: How Can we Improve the Production and Dissemination of Work with International Applicability which Links Research, Education and Practice.” While national professional journals gear their articles to a narrower audience, which generally shares a culture and a language, international journals must appeal to a wider and diverse audience.

The context of any issue becomes much larger when viewed by readers from a variety of countries, cultural groups, and languages. The use of language, standardized terminology, and the global context in which an issue evolves are crucially important (1). Countries may have differing levels of development of a concept such as scope of practice or professional liability. In order to appeal to a wider audience, the material would need at least a short synopsis of the evolution as well as current understanding of the concept. This wider perspective can be extremely valuable for those struggling with the development of the concept.

Basic definitions are encouraged by Cantillon et al. (2). They discuss language in medical journals and recommend including definitions that are peer reviewed prior to submission. For example, in the United States, surgery means that a surgeon performs an operation on a patient. In England, the word “surgery” refers to a physician’s office, not

necessarily an operation. While readers may eventually understand the meaning of a particular term, providing definitions of key terms would allow them to concentrate on the intended purpose of the article.

Pierson (3), while being encouraged by the support for authors, included advice for appealing to wider audiences. Reviewers and editors must include the “so what” factor that makes a topic relevant to their journal readers. Authors are charged with knowing who their audience is, including how the development of their topic is similar or different from what is occurring globally and why this topic is important to more than a local community. If recommendations cannot be adapted to another environment (such as nursing in a different country), then the article is irrelevant for an international readership.

Fees create another challenge for publication. These can be minimal or as high as several thousands of US dollars. The rationale for publishing fees is to allow for open access journals, where all material is open to the public. However, there is little discussion regarding journals with subscription fees that also charge a publishing fee. The subscription fees should account for the cost of publication.

Finally, the recent discovery of lax acceptance policies at several journals has led to much concern over quality of publication. Authors must write with integrity while editors must perform due diligence in reviewing articles for publication. Visit the journal’s website, check its impact factor, and review the credentials of the editor before committing your work.

References

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