Scientific Writing. Easy when you know how


This book is a handy summary of how to go about writing an article for a scientific journal. Most seasoned scientific writers would be familiar with the issues that are discussed but the book is aimed at novice writers and it is nice to have all the advice and suggestions condensed in one volume.

The book starts with a chapter that encourages researchers to write by discussing the rewards for being a good writer. Good time management skills are discussed to ensure writers devote sufficient time to the writing and polishing of their papers - a novel approach for would-be writers.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the nitty gritty of writing by advocating the IMRAD structure (introduction, method, results, and discussion.) But they contain much more than how the paper should be planned. They deal with tricky issues such as the politics surrounding authorship of research teams and how they could be listed. A credit point system for deciding authorship is suggested in one of the highlighted/boxed examples. Data analysis, interpretation of results, the golden rules for reporting numbers, tables and graphics and ethical approval are among some of the other aspects discussed which are central to writing a paper. Chapter 4 deals with finishing the paper dealing with such aspects as the title page, references, citations and peer reviews - all illustrated with highlighted examples, and boxed key messages. Each chapter ends with extensive references to websites, journals and books. I doubt though that novice writers would delve into many, if any, of the copious references. They would rather, I think, distill the information from the book and start writing.

A D Marais

Walter Fleming Scott

Walter Fleming Scott died aged 83 some days after a tragic car accident returning from a Game Reserve in Gauteng. His injuries were devastating and survival would have left him severely crippled. The medical profession - and his patients - will be the poorer for his loss. Wally exuded life. He was a delightful companion who first became my close friend in the 1940s when we were medical students in Johannesburg. He and I, with Gerry McNeill and Peter Moore made a foursome in the wards, wandering after hours in search of problem cases. Our arguments together helped us all to clear the examination hurdles and made us better doctors.

In clinical training, as in his sixty years of practice, Wally was at his best facing an unsolved problem. Because of his tenacity, knowledge and wisdom, he served his patients, and his friends, with warmth and distinction. He continued practising as a physician and as an assistant at the Cardiac Clinic until his death.

In 1947, my second year at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, I had become familiar with the joys of punting on the Cherwell, the banks of which are lined with trees and shrubs. My wife and I took Wally punting when he stayed with us after he had passed the Membership examinations of the Royal College of Physicians. The river was running strongly, making punting hazardous. At one stage when we had stopped under overhanging foliage, Wally wanted to try his hand, despite his...
unfamiliarity with the task. The punt immediately became ensnared as he tried in vain to get off base one, the punt sliding back and forth with foliage all over us; and there were minutes of uproarious laughter from his two passengers. True to form, Wally succeeded. His determination to achieve a goal he had set himself was indeed the hallmark of this beloved man.

The Scotts had a wide circle of friends and Wally also enjoyed his golf and his tennis. His whimsical sense of humour was a delight in any company. He was devoted to his wife, Nancy, who is now in poor health, needing frail care. Their active and talented daughter, Jenni, lives in Britain; and Roger, their son, is in radiological practice in Johannesburg. Between them, they bore the tragedy of Wally’s short life-supported illness when, as the days passed, it became obvious that survival was impossible, his injuries being so catastrophic.

E B Adams

Dr JW van der Riet


John had his kind conviction and his unselfish friendship. He was a true, loving father and grandfather, and last but not least, for such herhaling van die huldeblyk by sy begrafnis is ‘n dogter en twee seuns gebore.

John is getrou met Marie Strydom en uit die huwelik is ‘n dogter en twee seuns gebore.

Belangrik is dat op 6 September 1957 het John aan sy vrou Marie gese dat hy beslis die gedagte dat Bloemfontein ‘n mediese fakulteit moet kry, gaan uitbou. Na amper tien jaar van voete sleep deur die regering het die tyd aangebreek dat op 6 Junie 1966, Dr Carel de Wet dit aangekondig het dat ‘n mediese fakulteit aan Bloemfontein toegeken is.

Oor die jare lange toewyding aan die mediese beroep as praktisyn is nog min gese omdat John se grootste nalatenskap die totstandkoming van die mediese fakulteit was. John was sedert 1946 lid van die M. V.S.A. Hy was sekretaris van die Sentrale afdeling asook voorsitter, Tak-president in 1960, 1972, 1977 en 1983, Sekretaris van die Nagraadse beplannings komitee 1957 tot 1971, Lid van die Federaleraad 1960 - 1962 en 1966 - 1975, President van die Mediese Vereniging van Suid Afrika 1971 en ontvanger van die vereniging se brons medalje in 1976.


Rugby was een van sy groot belangstellings en hy was die eerste spandokter van die Vrystaat se rugby span. Ook het hy op die gebied van gemeenskaps betrokkenheid groot bydraes gelewer. Hy was ‘n trustee van die vereniging vir mense met liggaamlike gestremdhede en hy het liefdesdiens by Ons Kinderhuis en die aftree oord Mooihawe gelewer. Hy was ‘n verkose lid van die S.A. Geneeskundige en Tandheelkundige Raad en lid van die Uitvoerende Komitee. Hy was Bevelvoerder van die 4de Veldambulans van 1954 tot 1961, en in 1972 is die John Chard medalje aan hom toegeken. Hy was ook ‘n stigter en direkteur van die bank van die OVS.

John was a genuine leader one who lead by example and who motivated people not only by sound arguments, and level headed judgements, but also by his fairness and honesty, his kind conviction and his unselfish friendship. He was a true aristocrat and Christian gentleman of astonishing depth. We humbly thank the good Lord for such a caring family man, a loving father and grandfather, and last but not least, for such an exemplary guide and inspiring friend.’

Namens die Takraad Tak Vrystaat

SV Potgieter, Ere-sekretaris.