

## Excellent Trainees, Idle Authors: Time to Revitalize Sri Lankan Anaesthetic Authorship

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**Dear Editor,**

Sri Lanka is known to produce exceptional anaesthetic trainees, praised by both local and international medical communities, resultant of the dedication and motivation of the local trainers. While as trainees we heavily invest our so meticulously gained skills and knowledge for better perioperative and critical care, it is questionable whether we contribute in similar efficacy and vigor to the field of academic authorship.

Indeed, we are fortunate to have distinguished anaesthetic authors with international acclaim amidst us. They continue to conduct research and publish despite their busy academic, clinical and administrative duties and responsibilities. They have set an example for the juniors, and it is our responsibility to carry on the good work. But can they rest, reassured?

It is noticeable that academic publications are deficient among junior anaesthetists in Sri Lanka. Even the national anaesthetic journal published by the College of Anaesthesiologists and Intensivists, the Sri Lankan Journal of Anaesthesiology, receives and publishes papers

by local authors comparatively less compared to foreign authors.

International publications by local trainees are concurrently few, mostly comprising abstracts and case reports. This is in contrast to other medical specialties where authorship in reputed, international and local journals is plentiful.

This relative inertia in initiating academic writing is multifaceted among anaesthetic trainees.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, anaesthetic post-graduate training demands considerable time spent on clinical work. Thus, the laborious work of producing a manuscript and seeing it through the editorial and review process might be quite challenging for a trainee. However, it must be said that the potential publishable cases and opportunities and data to conduct audits and research are already available for an inquisitive apprentice author. Moreover, the unutilized, vast knowledge of the local trainers will unarguably make such research work easier and more productive.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, publications are considered 'tough to master' by inexperienced junior authors. Despite the availability of material and guidance, the process of writing intrigues them. Fluency in English and pattern of academic writing are other obstacles that might demotivate an aspiring local author. Academic Writing is realistic art. Persistence is key. With continued writing, the quality and speed of writing can be significantly refined and improved.<sup>3</sup>

The benefits of academic writing are numerous to anaesthetic trainees. Writing a paper, even a case report, requires a lot of reading about the topic resulting in the author gaining most up-to-date

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Received: 21/01/2022

Accepted: 30/08/2022

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4038/slja.v30i2.9005>



knowledge on the subject. Such knowledge might be very useful in postgraduate examinations. On the other hand, overseas job placement, which is a prerequisite for local trainees, becomes easier for an applicant with a publication history. It is unsurprising that most employers particularly look for publications in the curriculum vitae, which suggests how effective had the candidate been with his or her time (4). Joining an academic institution and pursuing a career in research similarly will require experience in academic writing and scholarly publications. The latter is imperative in promotions and tenures. In a nutshell, irrespective of the place of work, authorship will make a writer well-read, confident and inevitably a sought-out clinician, a speaker and a teacher.

Lastly, this open invitation is for fellow Sri Lankan junior anaesthetists to take up writing and to contribute to improving anaesthetic academic authorship to continue the selfless work and relieve the burden shouldered by our trainers.

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