

TALENT AND MEDICINE

The medical profession is not different from other workforce sharing with them all common interests, hobbies and talents. The majority of these activities are unrelated to medicine. Many are musicians, performers, artists, writers, critics, astronomers, photographers, etc not to mention their excellence in the world of sports. On the other hand there are also instances when the practice of these activities take the form of applied interpretation of what they know in human pathobiology and the concerned function. Thus some may be historians of clinical practice, clinical pharmacologists of locally used herbs, or clinical therapists of locally practiced folk medicine.

This section of the Bahrain Medical Bulletin will be devoted to "Talents in the Medical Profession" to show and exchange with others common interests and applied experience. Contributors are therefore welcomed to submit their presentation.

This issue contains two pieces of poetry written by Dr A K Chawla demonstrating a unique talent; one is a reflection on his views on care to the elderly and the other was in response to the 7th workshop organised by the Bahrain Medical Bulletin during the period between 20-21 November 1996 under the title "Critical Writing and Science Editing" and in which Professor WF Whimster and Dr J Salisbury of King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, London, UK took an active role.

The Editor

OUR ELDERLY: WHO CARES?

Everyone likes the rising Sun, the bright Sunshine of dawn,
For we all love, energy, activity, strength and brawn.
But alas! Every dawn ends up in dusk
The power, energy and action wanes, but the glow at
dusk is also great.

When you are born it's your rise, it's your dawn,
You are the magic, and a wonder, for your loving dad & mom.
You can't feed nor bathe yourself, you can't walk or even converse
All you can do is piss and cry, yet you are the centre of
their Universe.

They feed, clean, dress and protect you, be it day or night,
Not for days or months but from infancy through adolescence.
They lead and guide you step by step, until you can safely
live on your own,
Theirs, my dears, is a labour of love; it's not for a later
gain.

Time never stops, and the years fly by, you like it or not;
Age catches up with them, their systems begin to rust and rot.
Teeth fall and hands shake, knees pain and legs are frail,
Walking and feeding is hard; and God forbid if memory fails.

Immobility, Instability, Incontinence and Intellectual failure¹,
Are the dreaded four I's, that all elderly fear.
When they are helpless and dependent, in their twilight years,
The carers then need caring for.

Their call for help and tender loving care falls on deaf ears,
Doesn't go far.
Those who helped you walk and talk, call you now,
But sorry, life is so fast; you have no time to spare care.

No income, no resource, they aren't useful any more,
Wisdom may be there, but who listens? Who cares?
A burden, a nuisance, a headache, a sore,
These old ones, you can't take on, no longer, no more.

You wish, you hope, if someone else could care,
And do the job which, you know, is truly yours,
To look after your old ones in their disabled years
'The elderly should belong to the Community', you are sure.

Geriatric Hospitals and Elderly Homes are a blessing & a boon,
For those elderly who can't find love or care at home.
But the stay at these places, is against their wishes,
The trauma of neglect and rejection, weighs heavy on their souls.

Neglect is the malady, the elderly suffer from,
Not by strangers, but by their near, dear & loved ones.
Those loved ones for whom they shed their sweat and tears,
Are busy with their own cares; have no tears to shed for them.

Loneliness, Cruel loneliness; nurses can't cure loneliness,
No Kith or Kin, and no grandchildren to see or to talk,
No smiles, no cheers, no respect; no hustle or bustle,
All hope is lost, melancholy takes a firm grasp.

Blessed are the elderly, who, in their dusk years,
Are cared for by their loved ones, living with their dears,
So they feel wanted, loved, respected; content and pleased,
Till one day, the Sun sets finally, and sets their souls free,
To fly like a happy bird; humming and chirping above the trees.

REFERENCES

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On Writing a Scientific Paper

"Publish or perish", they say, is very true,
'To get published is no joke', I know, is also true.
Writing a Scientific paper is hard, at best,
To get it into a Scientific Journal, is harder still.

But you encounter some, who've written hundreds of them,
Not just written, but successfully published them too;
There must be a knack, an art, which could be acquired,
So that, after learning it, we could do as well as them.

I learnt these secrets quite recently,
From a master who described them very succinctly¹
Think and plan about your paper well in advance,
Get the message visible, at the first glance.

Follow IMRAD structure in all you write²,
Introduction: Any gaps in knowledge? And why you did it?
Methods: What you did and how you did it?
Results: What you found?, Tell in actual numbers,
Discussion: What's the meaning of your results?
In themselves and in relation to the work of others.

If your paper follows all these rules,
And has a clear message which shines through,
With proof supplied by the results you obtained,
Then give it a meaningful and catchy title and send it
through.

Before you send it, rewrite your article, remove distractions,
Better tell a colleague or two to read and criticize it³,
It may save the trouble to the referee and the editor,
Who, thus pleased, will grab your neat and meaningful paper?

Writing alone begets better writing,
Each finished paper goes through four or five drafts;
Till the final product is precise and concise,
Without verbosity, rambling or grammatical errors.

If you can impress the referees and the editor,
Which is what your aim should be?
Then your success is guaranteed and ensured,
Your paper will see the light of print very soon.

If they send it back, don't lose heart, don't despair,
It may be for corrections and clarifications here and there.
And if they don't accept, send to another, by all means,
Persist and preserve, till your important message is
carried through.

"Have a message; will write a paper!"
So does every scientist think?
Every paper becomes an important link,
In the long chain of human progress, I think.
Amen! (Be it so).

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3. Paton A. Write a paper. In: How to do it: 1. 2nd ed. British Medical Association: Oxford University Press, 1991:193-7.