

Publication Workshop Research Agenda, Opportunities and Pearls

Publication Workshop

Research Committee

In this workshop, we intend to empower researchers to prepare their manuscripts for publication. Very often, finished projects are archived instead of disseminated. Participants will be assigned to small groups and present their work in a closed forum. Feedback will be given from peers and an expert panel as to whether or not the content has merit, is accurate, clear, meets the standard for scientific writing, could be improved in time and/or is ready for publication. The manuscript will be reviewed and edited in real time and prepared for submission in an appropriate journal.

The University's Research Agenda, Successes, Failures, Future Directions

D Eldemire-Shearer

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Strategic Plan 2017–2022, dubbed “The UWI Triple A Strategy: Revitalizing Caribbean Development”, was formulated with due consideration to the prevailing external environment of the Caribbean. The plan is based on the fundamental assumption that without strong economies in the Caribbean, the UWI will not be strong. This fundamental assumption led to the formulation of the “Triple A” strategy which embodies three pillars: (a) Access – increasing enrollment at the tertiary level; (b) Alignment – align with industry to strengthen innovation capacities and regional economies and lead to higher levels of growth; and (c) Agility – to take advantages of the potential opportunities in the international arena. The research agenda for 2017–2022 builds on the “Triple A” strategy. Access – the strategic objective is to improve the quality, quantity and impact of research, innovation and publication. The research agenda includes increasing the enrolment of graduate and research students and working with faculty members to increase the quantity of research publications in refereed journals. Alignment – increase

and improve academic/industry research partnerships by building partnerships and by developing new research programmes which are geared towards solving regional and global problems. Agility – agility in research is essential in order to promptly respond to the opportunities which are available for conducting quality impactful research, such as funding, the formulation of multidisciplinary research teams and research clusters.

Surmounting Barriers to Health Research in The Bahamas

M Frankson

It is imperative that locally relevant health research be done in especially global regions with largely preventable disease occurrence rates coupled with markedly limited resources of various kinds jostling with competing national priorities begging for urgent attention. Barriers to the scientific conduct of needed studies may include insufficient capacity in manpower, money, management support (including protected research time) and investigative skills; comfort with scientific writing being one such. Engaging the audience, this presenter will both suggest specific barriers and offer approaches to bring to bear appropriate knowledge, attitudes and project management proficiencies directed at increasing the likelihood of successfully surmounting barriers to health research in the Bahamian academic and medical practice environment.

Opportunities for Collaboration: Caribbean Regional Centre of Research Excellence Focussing on Cancer and Cardiometabolic Research

C Ragin

Health data show a rapidly increasing burden of non-communicable diseases in the Caribbean. The African-Caribbean Cancer Consortium, a supported consortium of the

National Cancer Institute's Epidemiology and Genomics Research Program (NCI-EGRP), is a global cancer research programme of Fox Chase Cancer Center, and partnered with The University of the West Indies, has had a strong partnership since 2007. To date, research in cancer, nutritional epidemiology and genetics has resulted in numerous publications with the majority focussed on prostate cancer. The long-term plan is to establish a Regional Centre for Cancer and Cardiometabolic Research comprised of Centres of Excellence spread across the Caribbean. A Caribbean-wide community-health and research/laboratory needs assessment generated in this programme will guide the development of a strategic plan for scientific focus and sustainability of the centre.

The HEALinc: Creating New Knowledge and Advancing Innovation in Developing Countries

D Cox

This paper discusses the challenges of creating new knowledge and advancing innovation in health in developing countries and regions such as the Caribbean. The HEALinc (HEALTH Innovation/Improvement Incubator) was developed in The Bahamas in 2016 to harness the creativity and resources of leaders and mentors in the healthcare field. The HEALinc provides an inclusive space that fosters diversity and supports mentors in: (a) mentoring leaders in areas outside of their expertise; (b) sharing resources; and (c) executing their "Passion Projects". Three major and innovative Institutional Review Board-approved research projects were successfully completed in under eight months of the inception of the incubator. This paper discusses how the incubator works, why it has been successful in creating new knowledge, as well as plans for expansion to the Caribbean more broadly and the potential social impact of the HEALinc for improving health and healthcare in the region.

Analysis of the 144 Abstracts of 2007–2016 at the Research Day, School of Clinical Medicine and Research, The Bahamas

G Jones, K Jones

Background: A decade of Research Day presentations showcased student research efforts and provided for professional continuing education while highlighting issues for further research. The purpose of this analysis of the published abstracts (144 of 174 presentations) was to tabulate their characteristics, topics, designs and methods, and also to determine whether quality is associated with more recent date of publication, greater number of abstract authors and clinical subject area.

Methods: All 144 abstracts as published (WIMJ 65(S5):16–83) were manually coded for the dimensions

and items of interest. The PDF journal issue was converted to text for systematic text analyses. Data analysis provided proportions (%) and statistical significance.

Results: These 144 abstracts with 49 000 words represent a research effort with 490 authorships and more than 25 000 study subjects over one decade. The median length of titles was 13 words, "The Bahamas" occurred in 57% and location of research (*eg* clinics) in 31%. Disease categories with more than nine abstracts were: infectious 15%, cardiovascular 13%, cancer 12%, psychiatric 8% and obstetrical 7%, of all 144 abstracts. Overall, 23% of the abstracts were specific to women's health (female or as a mother) and 5% to men's health. The median number of authors was three (maximum 16). Study designs were cross-sectional in 56% (questionnaires primarily) and longitudinal in 33% (retrospective primarily). The median sample size was 221, and a total of 43% included complex statistics. Secular trends with complexity were absent.

Conclusion: Greater structure and details in abstracts would facilitate critical appraisal and might help with full publication. Survey findings and retrospective analytics can lead to thematic hypothesis-driven tests of interventions where change is indicated.

The Submission Process

C Ragin

Submission for publication could be a daunting task. In many postgraduate programmes, the thesis and research requirements do not align with journal requirements. Understanding what journal articles require will improve submission rates. In this presentation, we will outline what makes a good research article, how to format for publication, and the journal submission process. This will include how to choose the correct journal, how to write a good cover letter, declaration of conflicts, reviewer suggestions and copyright transfer agreements. It is very unlikely that your manuscript will be accepted at first instance. Therefore we will also discuss how to communicate with the journal editor about your submitted manuscript and also revision strategies after the review.

What Reviewers Look For?

Panel Discussion Chair: M Frankson

Once submitted, articles are subjected to review by experts in the field. These expert evaluations are needed to maintain quality, performance and credibility, and form the peer review process. In order to determine the suitability for publication, articles are judged for originality, scientific merit and relevance *ie* what does this work at the body of evidence. The overall layout must be in accordance with the journal's standard for scientific writing. Many journals

require supporting documents at the time of submission, such as a cover letter, declaration of conflicts, and documents to show that ethical standards are adhered to. Manuscripts should be written in Standard English in the active voice and word limits should be adhered to. Errors detract from the reading. References should reflect the current body of knowledge and should be paraphrased and not quoted directly. In this panel, we hope to discuss what reviewers look for and the common reasons for rejection.

Challenge of Rejection and the Threat of Success

Panel Discussion Chair: R Roberts

The response from the editor after manuscript submission may fall into one of the following categories: clear accept,

accept with minor revision, accept with major revision, or reject. If the article is accepted, formulate your new hypothesis and begin the new project. If major revision is required, this is to be completed as soon as possible. Many journals give timelines for the review process. Comments made during the peer review process can be a valuable learning tool. Insights as to how the manuscript may be improved and how to appeal to a wide audience are often given, and an opportunity is given to further develop areas that lack clarity. Rejection can also be a learning experience. Reasons may range from unsuitability of the subject matter of the research for the journal to gross errors in methods. The key is to review, improve and resubmit as soon as possible. In this panel discussion, we will hear from experts regarding how to overcome these issues.