

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES OF UNIVERSITY PHARMACY STUDENTS AND STAFF TOWARDS SCIENTIFIC WRITING: A QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Peer-reviewed journal publication of the research paper is a well-established process that is central to public dissemination of scientific knowledge. To this end, manuscript preparation is an important skill to be acquired during an early career scientist's development, competence of which demonstrates motivation towards excellence in their chosen research discipline or vocational profession.

Objective: The study aimed at assessing the knowledge, attitude and practices of university final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, PhD research scholars and academic faculty members of pharmacy in Punjab, India towards styles, conventions and procedures of scientific writing.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional, self-administered questionnaire was conducted by 315 respondents. Data were analyzed using SPSS.

Results: 59.4% of respondents showed a poor knowledge of scientific writing. However, the attitude among respondents was positive, 66.0% indicating willingness to attend seminars and/or workshops in order to improve their knowledge of the principles of scientific writing. Only 16.5% of participants had any experience of involvement in submitting a manuscript for publication to a peer-reviewed journal.

Conclusions: Among the cohort of pharmacy students knowledge of all aspects of scientific writing was very poor. This may be due to a lack of formal incorporation of this topic in the undergraduate and taught postgraduate curriculum. It is recommended that the process of writing-up of research for publication should be embedded in the pharmacy curriculum. This inclusion will also benefit students during university study and after graduation by fostering their reading and improving their interpretation of scientific journal articles written by others.

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