

# The True Value of Mentorship

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As I write this editorial, some very sad news has crossed my desk. Rose Mary Carroll-Johnson, MN, RN, passed away of cancer on February 21, 2011. Rose Mary was the editor-in-chief of the *Oncology Nursing Forum* for 20 years and guided that publication to the current standard of nursing publishing

excellence it holds today. Rose Mary also had a long and storied nursing career and most recently served as a Senior Research Specialist in the Division of Nursing Research and Education for City of Hope in Duarte, California.

Rose Mary was very supportive of nurse authors and contributed so much to our profession. As a fairly new nurse author, I was stunned to find out that I had been awarded the 2004 Susan Baird Oncology Nursing Society's writing award for Excellence in Writing: Clinical Practice. Even more thrilling was the fact that Rose Mary called me personally to inform me of the award. I was pretty excited, but so was she! Her support of new authors was appreciated and her genuine interest in helping all authors shape their manuscripts was inspiring. Rose Mary's expert guidance and mentorship to oncology nurse authors will be sorely missed.

## Need for Mentors

As Rose Mary so eloquently demonstrated in her leadership of the *Forum*, the mentoring of new authors interested in writing for publication is critical. Because writing for publication can seem intimidating, experienced published authors can provide support and guidance, often helping a paper get to publication (Spear,

2006). New authors have valuable information often gained from years of clinical practice. These experiences can be shared with their colleagues in the form of a publication, yet authors may be reluctant to participate in the writing process. Some of the reasons for not writing may be due to the lack of resources or information to help get their paper to print (Spear, 2006). Mentorship by experienced authors can make a key difference.

Fear of rejection by a publisher may be another reason new authors avoid submitting potential publications (Spear, 2006). By using a mentor, new authors can get valuable feedback and suggestions regarding their work, which can increase their chances of acceptance. A mentor can provide a critique about works in progress and instruct the new author in possible strategies for publishing success. Writing for publication takes time, and revisions are common and expected. Reviewers for nursing and other health-care journals provide essential feedback regarding potential papers and often make important recommendations for revising the paper. This is such a critical part of the publishing process, and why we so value our blind peer review process for the *Journal of the Advanced Practitioner in Oncology (JADPRO)*.

The writing process is multifaceted, but the general progression to publication usually requires a potential author to identify an idea, research the literature on the chosen topic, and then begin the actual process of writing. Developing an outline of your plan for the paper is a good start. Sharing your ideas and early papers with colleagues to get their input is another useful strategy toward developing a publishable paper (Dixon, 2001). A mentor can provide key guidance and advice on structuring a paper. Writing is a skill that can be developed like any other nursing or health-care skill: time, practice, and a mentor can make the difference in getting a paper accepted for publication.

Advanced practitioners (APs) are experienced professionals skilled in patient care, the art of teaching, and/or may serve in leadership or administrative capacities. Not all APs are published authors but there are good reasons for publishing your work. Writing for publication can communicate findings to others working in patient care or

in your area of interest. Practice changes may occur because of information found in a publication (Dixon, 2001).

The members of the editorial board of *JADPRO* are firmly committed to mentorship of new authors, and will provide support and guidance to those authors wishing to develop a manuscript for publication. We recognize mentorship as a critical process to the publishing of new authors, and we honor the memory of Rose Mary Carroll-Johnson, an editor and mentor of excellence in the oncology nursing literature.

## In This Issue

This issue of the *JADPRO* discusses a variety of topics of interest. Maureen Swiderski addresses predictive genetic testing for cancer susceptibility, and Lydia Madsen and Geri LoBiondo-Wood offer a thorough review of the role of the AP in caring for men with prostate cancer and lower urinary tract symptoms. Catherine Bishop continues our tumor marker series with a discussion of the most relevant markers in breast cancer treatment. In our *Grand Rounds* feature, Patricia Palmer discusses a complex case of a patient with primary central nervous system lymphoma who developed several comorbidities. In *Practice Matters*, Irina Rifkind, Sharon LaFever, Robin Cianos, and Terry Sparhawk discuss the development of an early postoperative intraperitoneal chemotherapy policy for patients with colorectal cancer. *Prescriber's Corner* features Kelley Mayden and a focus on eribulin mesylate, a newly approved agent in the treatment of this disease. *Tools & Technology* features a list of favorite websites recommended by several of our AP colleagues.

We hope that these topics will be valuable to the AP working with oncology patients and as always, we invite you to share with us your feelings about our new publication and what you would like to read as we greet the spring season!

## References

- Dixon, N. (2001). Writing for publication—A guide for new authors. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 13 (5), 417–421.
- Spear, H. J. (2006). Nurses and publication success: The value and importance of mentoring. Faculty Publications and Presentations, Paper 15. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/nurse\\_grad\\_fac\\_pubs/15](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/nurse_grad_fac_pubs/15)