

A guiding light for medical writing: an Editor-in-Chief's reflection

It is a genuine pleasure to witness the forthcoming publication of *Surgeons' Guide to Medical Writing*. As an academic surgeon and the Editor-in-Chief of *HepatoBiliary Surgery and Nutrition (HBSN)* since its inception, I am intimately acquainted with the multifaceted challenges that authors, reviewers, and editors routinely encounter in the medical publishing arena—from navigating the path to publication to enhancing the rigor of peer review. In this context, this book arrives as both a timely and eminently practical resource, offering valuable insights and solutions.

This comprehensive volume, comprising 22 chapters, delves into the diverse challenges of medical writing with a particular focus on the skills and strategies for successful publication. Its user-friendly design—featuring key points at the outset of each chapter—enhances its accessibility and utility. The book also brings together an exceptional group of contributors, including my close friend, Dr. Timothy M. Pawlik, whose significant contributions to *HBSN* as Deputy Editor-in-Chief have been deeply appreciated.

With over 13 years of experience as an editor, I find particular resonance in the book's treatment of essential topics such as journal metrics, the peer review process, and the EQUATOR Guidelines. In my own editorial practice, I have consistently worked alongside the editorial office to elevate journal quality through rigorous peer review. A notable milestone in this regard was the publication of “The SUPER reporting guideline for surgical technique” (1) in *HBSN*—a contribution that filled a critical gap within the EQUATOR network. I wholeheartedly echo Dr. Pawlik's assertion that “More accurate reporting of surgical techniques would be SUPER” (2).

While the book has prompted meaningful reflection on my role as a journal editor, its true value lies in its relevance to authors and reviewers alike. It thoughtfully addresses the needs of beginners and non-native speakers in medical writing, while also tackling broader concerns such as scientific integrity and the role of social media in academic communication. Furthermore, its guidance on how to critically read a paper and conduct peer review is particularly instructive for reviewers.

I extend my sincere commendation and congratulations to the book's editors—Dr. Abe Fingerhut, current Editor-in-Chief of the *Annals of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgery*; Dr. Desmond Winters, current Editor-in-Chief of the *British Journal of Surgery (BJS)*; and Dr. Steven Wexner, current Editor-in-Chief of the *Surgery* for their vision and dedication, and I offer my tribute to all contributing authors, whose insightful chapters deftly address the enduring challenges of medical writing.

References

1. Zhang K, Ma Y, Wu J, et al. The SUPER reporting guideline suggested for reporting of surgical technique. *Hepatobiliary Surg Nutr* 2023;12:534-44.
2. Ruff SM, Pawlik TM. More accurate reporting of surgical techniques would be SUPER. *Hepatobiliary Surg Nutr* 2023;12:628-30.

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