

First-time authors: your profession needs you

Nicola Rusling

Publishing articles in a peer-reviewed journal such as *Wounds UK* is an effective way of disseminating research and audit findings and sharing innovations in clinical practice with your peers. It helps to ensure that standards of care continue to improve, and that current practice does not go unquestioned. In addition, writing for publication can help to raise your professional profile — and it can be enormously rewarding to see your name in print next to your first published article! Every issue of *Wounds UK* features articles written by experienced authors who are leaders in their field. While these articles are vital and important, we also want to encourage first-time authors to write for the journal.

As a result, we are launching a writing for publication competition. By entering, four first-time, inexperienced and/or unconfident writers can win the opportunity to receive mentoring through the entire writing process, with the aim of publishing an article in *Wounds UK*.

From the sheer number of entrants received for the *Wounds UK* awards — and the many posters and free papers submitted to our annual conference, we know that many of you are engaging in research and practice development that improves the lives of patients. However, we also know that a large majority of these findings do not make it into print and, therefore, do not reach as wide an audience as they deserve.

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Publishing in a journal is the true end point of research. Long after the presentations are made and details debated, only publication remains. Studies carried out but not written up soon become dated and forgotten. Findings can only influence practice if they are published and made available to your peers.

Many practitioners are scared to write and believe that being published in a journal is beyond their ability... this is why we are launching our writing for publication competition.

Readers that we meet at conferences often talk passionately about their research or their practice, and have ideas for an article that they would like to write, or are in the process of writing. A great many confess to being scared to write, believing that they could not possibly do it and that being published in a journal is beyond their ability. We know of experienced nurses approaching retirement, who have a wealth of knowledge, but have never written about it. Some have had off-putting experiences at the hands of journal editors, others acknowledge that they find writing a struggle and that it doesn't come easily to them. But why should it? Most healthcare professionals have little formal training in writing papers. A lucky few may have encountered a mentor who not only knew how to write, but could

also pass on this knowledge. To others, writing comes naturally. The rest learn to write papers by doing it and by learning from mistakes. But valuable time is wasted submitting papers, only for them to be rejected. Often, these rejections could have been avoided if the authors had been given more guidance.

This is why we are launching the writing for publication competition. The entry criteria are straightforward. *Wounds UK* is seeking four healthcare professionals working in wound healing/management, who we can mentor through all stages of the writing process from concept to submission for blind peer-review in the journal. One of the editorial team will provide feedback and guidance at all stages to help you gain confidence in your own time and at your own pace. All you need is an idea for an article, enthusiasm and the ability to receive critical feedback.

It is vital that those working in wound healing and management make their voices heard and share their experiences with their peers. Those of you who want to see your ideas, findings, views or experiences in print please enter our competition. **WUK**

For further information and an application form please see opposite, visit www.wounds-uk.com or visit our stand at the Wounds UK Harrogate conference (13–15th November) to have an informal chat about your ideas for an article. Nicola Rusling (Managing Editor) will be available to answer any general writing for publication questions during the speed networking session.