

EDITORIAL

Writing a textbook on emergency medicine - my experience

Devendra Richhariya

Is writing a medical book or medical writing “different”? — partly Yes, because our profession is considered enigmatic by the uninitiated, and perhaps because the vocabulary we use is so different from the words most people speak each day. We can say, medical writing is a research study on a topic, putting words on paper in the past and today on a computer screen. For those who aspire to author works for others to read, the fundamentals of writing depend on the various backgrounds.

All of us who work in emergency medicine have plenty of patients and their treatment-related experiences to write about. Emergency physicians deal with lots of medical issues and have important first-hand knowledge, too, regarding how medicine and medical care work. When I got started doing this, I believed that other people would be interested in and could be helped by whatever insights we’ve gathered over the years. If you’re one of those people, great, but here are a few things you should understand.

While being a writer has major advantages, it also has its own challenges. Challenges mold and train us, so anything without challenges is boring. Some challenges can drain the life out of you though, which is why it is good to enlist them. A good book brings value to the people who buy it - enjoyment, useful knowledge, and, the author hopes, a combination of the all. Any potential author should really, *really* understand, that book publishing is a business first. This means no matter how wonderful your insights or compelling your thoughts are, the prospective author needs to convince the publishers why this book is different from other emergency medicine books that people should buy. In another way, the author is pitching as much a business plan to publishers as anything else. When a publisher actually accepts your proposal, you can sit down and write the actual book. It’s not a good idea to write much more than the sample chapters until that happens. *Stamina required:* You have to be prepared for the psychological challenge of this process. Multiple rounds of editing, rewriting, further editing, and proofreading can be exhausting and frustratingly slow. A good teamwork and a medical editor can help you speed up and manage the whole process. They can do a lot of the work and chasing for you.

As writing a medical book or writing a chapter is seen as an honor in its own right, the assignment needs to be treated with sincerity by elucidating the topic in detail, “*Plan, Research, Collect, Write, Revise, Edit, and Publish.*” Maximal effort should be made to keep in mind that the book will reach a large target audience. The purpose of this editorial is to provide guidance to residents and junior specialists in the field of emergency medicine to improve their writing skills. It’s interesting and fun to write books of the sort I do. Even if you are successful in getting published, however, don’t expect to make much financial gain doing it. Even so, it’s well worth the effort, I think, and you might even do some good to the emergency medicine community in the process.

So, You Think You Would Like to Write and Publish a Book on Emergency Medicine Topic!!

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