Why Write?  
To Impact Patient Care!

Someone once asked why I published so much. I did not consider myself a born writer, so it made me pause to think about it, especially because it took 27 iterations of my manuscript to be ready for my first publication (Scogna & Smalley, 1979) (and that was in the days before computers when each version had to be completely retyped)! I realized I wrote for my current and future patients and because I wanted to improve cancer care.

When I started my career as a cancer nurse more than 30 years ago, many of my patients died. But they were generous in what they taught me about their lives and their cancer experiences. Their gift to me was one that I felt compelled to share with others. I realized that I might be able to directly care for 10 patients, and because I wanted to improve cancer care. Then ask yourself if you have shared that knowledge or skill with anyone other than the patients directly in your care. If not, could you consider developing something for CJON to do just that? It could be a letter to the editor, a column, or an article. Please think about it. Other nurses could benefit as you have. Other patients could benefit as well.

Writing an article for publication has certainly gotten easier with the advent of word processing. It is not, however, easy. Mostly it requires persistence and a strong desire to influence cancer care. It can also be made easier by the collective support of mentors, colleagues, and publishing staff. The CJON mission is to develop the publication skills of oncology nurses. The CJON Mentor/Fellow Writing Program is just one of the ways we do that. I would like you to think about your area of expertise as a cancer nurse. Then ask yourself if you have shared that knowledge or skill with anyone other than the patients directly in your care. If not, could you consider developing something for CJON to do just that? It could be a letter to the editor, a column, or an article. Please think about it. Other nurses could benefit as you have. Other patients could benefit as well.

Thirty years ago, there were two cancer nursing journals, the Oncology Nursing Forum and Cancer Nursing, and few cancer nursing books; both journals were published quarterly. I could read each issue from cover to cover before the next one arrived. Today, numerous journals and books make it virtually impossible to keep current on all aspects of cancer nursing. Information seeking and utilization have become critical skills for nurses. Finding the right information when it is needed has become important as evidence-based practice assumes a greater prominence.

As a Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing reader, I hope that you have found articles that help you do your job better.

References
