



Colombian Journal of Anesthesiology

Revista Colombiana de Anestesiología

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The reflection paper

El artículo de reflexión

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Writing for publication purposes is a responsibility that goes beyond knowing how to correctly capture words on a piece of paper. Very often, the most knowledgeable and experienced people on a particular subject lack the training and the skills to write a good scientific article, as in addition to being an expert on the topic, a set of skills are required, including the ability to conduct an adequate search for scientific information, timely processing of the information using a reference manager, conduct at least at a basic level, a critical reading of such information, knowing and using the standards for completeness established based on the type of scientific article to be published, and finally, proficiency in writing—which is not an easy task. Writing scientific papers requires a general standard as stated by RB McKerrow: “Present your facts as simply as possible, even boldly. Nobody expects flowers, or eloquence, or literary ornaments in a research article.”¹

It has been shown that part of the problems with scientific research, such as lack of reproducibility or uselessness, are due to inappropriate reporting.² There are multiple strategies to improve the completeness of published medical research. The so-called Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency Of health Research Network initiative provides statements and tools to facilitate the

presentation of complete and useful manuscripts for users of scientific evidence.³ These tools have been designed for observational and diagnostic trials, for clinical essays, systematic reviews, and qualitative research, inter alia.

However, articles for reflection are different. According to the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*⁴ (Spanish Language Dictionary), articles for reflection are different. To reflect (from reflection) means to “think attentively and carefully on something.” In that sense, an article for reflection shall essentially contain the result of a thinking and reflection process by the authors on a particular topic, rather than the result of a compilation of other people’s thoughts and opinions, regardless of whether such compilation on some specific matter may be appropriate for argument sake.

There is no doubt that an important ingredient of any action taken in the area of health care is mostly the result of tradition transferred from the professor to the student, generation after generation, and of the “school” that imparted the training, rather than of the reliable scientific evidence behind. Hence, articles for reflection become an important tool to capture and preserve in time the opinion of an expert, despite the unavoidable influences that intervene on such opinion. The author shall be able to mention the potential influences of his/her reflection,

How to cite this article: Gómez JC, Calvache JA. The reflection paper. Rev Colomb Anesthesiol. 2018;46:1-2.

Read the Spanish version of this article at: <http://links.lww.com/RCA/A27>.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/CJ9.0000000000000037>

such as the emotional component impregnated in the manuscript.⁵ The approval and use of this expertise and reasoning, resulting from a historical clinical practice, represents one of the pillars of a judicious evidence-based medical practice; properly conveying such medical practice is critical.⁶

Fortunately, and in line with this idea, trends such as constructivism⁷ have become increasingly stronger; problem-based learning,⁸ critical thinking,⁹ and competencies-based learning,¹⁰ all share the idea of reflection versus “verbatim repetition” and knowledge building rather than “committing to memory”. Such reflexive outlook is an important education tool.⁵ The expectation is that any professional receiving such kind of training will have improved skills to convey—that is, through articles for reflection—his/her critical outlook on the topic about which he or she has enough experience or knowledge.

So we welcome the articles for reflection presented in this addendum to the Colombian Journal of Anesthesiology, within the framework of the XXXII Colombian Congress of Anesthesiology and Resuscitation, with the hope that the materials selected will be of interest to all readers.

Funding

The authors have no funding to disclose.

Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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