



Editorial

Why, What and Where: 3W in hepatology



Research (medical among the others) is one of the most challenging, creative, expensive and demanding activity a man can do. It needs to vision the problem and come out with experiments which can prove or deny what we think may be true. When the results are obtained and we think are solid, the next question arises: **WHY** I will make my data public and available to the scientific community worldwide? This WHY is based on several reasons. The first is to show the community that I am involved actively in the diffusion of medical knowledge and to gather/improve my scientific reputation thus increasing the possibility to have a better position and bigger grants. We must avoid the pressure to publish and prevent as much as we can the “publish or perish” syndrome.

At the end of each study, the number of data is usually much more than what expected when the research was planned, opening the intriguing and sometimes difficult issue of **“WHAT”** to include in the article I will submit. This is where the scientific rigor needs to be the only driving force to prevent unscientific selection of what seems to us more promising and disregarding what look less in favor of our thesis. When Galileo Galilei taught his fellows that the sun was still and the earth was circling (the so-called heliocentrism), in sharp contrast with the dogma (he was tried by the Inquisition for heresy), he asked to perform all the experiments to prove the opposite thesis; only and only when all the results were negative, the conclusion that the earth was rotating around the sun can be firmly stated. Unfortunately, this criterium is seldom applied.

Once your paper is ready, the next question is **“WHERE”** it may be published. Several different parameters must be considered but one among the others is the most crucial: the impact factor of the journal where my paper will be submitted. This vision may be partially misleading. While it is true that the most prestigious journals have the highest IF, it is also true that if I want to have my data available to the wider possible audience I should not publish in a journal where the access is restricted to either subscribers of

libraries of research centers/universities. This is the reason why the policy of open access is gaining momentum. Unfortunately, the cost for open access is rapidly increasing making the possibility to submit to those groups which are not funded almost impossible. The open access option is very important however, particularly for clinical studies dealing with local/regional diseases (liver diseases included). In a world where the circulation of people is dramatically increasing and where you can cross continents in less than 12 h, being informed of what is occurring in remote realities will be important. How can an hepatologist of the Northern hemisphere be aware of the clinical picture and treatment options of a hepatitis due to Yellow Fever virus or other Flaviviruses, such as Zika and dengue viruses if this information is not available openly [1]? Therefore, the possibility of publishing in a widely read journal on series collected in certain areas is upmost relevant. This is one of the reasons Annals of Hepatology may serve as an important scientific herald [2].

The 3W approach of translational hepatology is a challenging task but it will worth effective should all of us keep our mind open.

References

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- [2] Panduro A, Tiribelli C, Chávez-Tapia NC, Uribe M. A new stage in annals of hepatology. *Ann Hepatol* 2018;17:339–40, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0011.7377>.

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