

## Publication addiction during COVID-19 pandemic - A rising boon or a bane

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a massive upsurge in manuscript submission, expedited reviews, and a rapid publication process in a short span of time.<sup>[1]</sup> On one end, it opened up numerous publication opportunities for young researchers, and at the other end, it invited publication addiction (PA) for researchers and clinician-scientist.<sup>[2]</sup> The recent perspective by Dr. Finlay has given tremendous insights into PA and stimulated us to share our thoughts over the same during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>[3]</sup> This perspective focuses on identifying the traits of PA, whether it is a boon for the researchers during the ongoing pandemic or a bane for the research world.

By reading and scrutinizing an academic journal regularly, you are already at high risk for PA.<sup>[4]</sup> Excessive digital device use, overeating, gambling, smoking, and excessive alcohol intake are various behavioral addictions.<sup>[5]</sup> However, PA can be another addiction that is highly unreported. PA can have a significant impact on the lives of those addicted to it. The various features of PA include a constant desire for publication, feeling of euphoria on seeing your name in the journal, spending excessive time over this habit daily, strategic planning, not taking rejections lightly, and criticizing and blaming peers when an article is rejected.<sup>[6]</sup> After a rejection, the five stages of grief denial, anger, bargain, death, and acceptance (DABDA) seem to fit well.<sup>[7]</sup> Some characteristics of PA can also be equated closely to other common addictions, such as lack of social activities, unexplained anxiety, reduced sleep, neglecting health, overwork, feeling of denial, a workaholic attitude, and delayed celebration of a publication.<sup>[8]</sup> This can be followed by frequent checking of citations, h-index, i-10 index, scrolling PubMed, Publons, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar.<sup>[9]</sup> Some authors frequently keep checking the status of their submitted articles, which can again be equated to PA.

The other warning signs or characteristics of PA can be publishing more than 10–15 articles per year or having more than 100 publications in a short period, publishing multiple small articles, minor issues, and even academically combating with peers for publications.<sup>[10]</sup> Usually, the top-ranking authors have PA. The other features of PA can be developing and mastering the response strategies such as writing an exhaustive response letter to reviewers and leaving little room for them to reject the article. Regular and constant emails by journals, highlighting the impact factor, PubMed indexing, review, and publication results in a short period also attract authors and invite PA.<sup>[11]</sup> The eureka moments of PA are receiving acceptance emails, PubMed indexing of articles, increase in ResearchGate impact factor, receiving the proof check from a journal, and observing your name repeatedly in journals after publications.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Publication Addiction as a Boon

During the pandemic, PA acted as a boon for young researchers. It ignited the desire to publish, gain academic knowledge, utilize the time, and learn research and

publication in a step ladder fashion.<sup>[13]</sup> PA had a positive impact on most clinicians, researchers, and clinician-scientists. It helped exchange ideas, peer recognition, journal invitations, editorial board positions, promotions, and opened platforms for collaborations. PA acted as a foundation stone for many of us, and juvenile careers flourished under expert guidance. In the future, PA can convert clinicians and researchers into clinician-scientists and may lead to many pathbreaking innovations and scientific discoveries.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Publication Addiction as a Bane

The time spent publishing multiple small articles could have been used to procure various grants and convert small publications to the bigger and more important ones. PA and rushing through publication also invited salami slicing, plagiarism, result manipulation, and duplication of publications.<sup>[15]</sup> The authors were more inclined to pay huge article publication charges (APC) to publish their articles, chose predatory journals for rapid publications, and used article formatting agencies to achieve short-term laurels. Paying huge APCs for open access can be equated to gifting incentives to the journals or the publication team. Some authors were motivated to publish to enhance their CV or job profile required to achieve a promotion. However, for some, this was done to satisfy their PA.<sup>[16]</sup>

In a nutshell, PA is prevalent in almost all scientific streams and communities, including ophthalmology. The peak of PA was witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in the number of article submissions, the rapid peer review process, exponential growth in publications, impact factor, and citations hike can be the objective measures of PA. This is probably the first perspective in Ophthalmology highlighting the burning issue of PA during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Acknowledgements

Aravind Eye Hospital and Post Graduate Institute of Ophthalmology, Pondicherry.

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10.4103/ijo.IJO\_386\_22

**Cite this article as:** Gurnani B, Kaur K, Nath M. Publication addiction during COVID-19 pandemic - A rising boon or a bane. *Indian J Ophthalmol* 2022;70:1402-3.