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Sharing experiences and challenges faced by junior scientists during publication

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UVRI Mentorship Training In Grant Writing, 11th December 2019

My first article

- 2 years at UVRI, data from PMTCT
- Encouraged by supervisor
- Did not know how/where to start
- Received a lot of support & mentorship

JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes.
39(3):354-358, JULY 1ST, 2005
DOI: 10.1097/01.qai.0000148081.38331.92, PMID: 15980698
Issn Print: 1525-4135
Publication Date: July 1st, 2005



 Print

HIV Risk Perception and Prevalence in a Program for Prevention of Mother-to-Child HIV Transmission: Comparison of Women Who Accept Voluntary Counseling and Testing and Those Tested Anonymously

Harriet Mpairwe;Lawrence Muhangi;Proscovia Namujju;Andrew Kisitu;Alex Tumusiime;Moses Muwanga;James Whitworth;Saul Onyango;Benon Biryahwaho;Alison Elliott;

Main challenges with first article

- Did not know how to analyse data → worked with statistician
- How to structure of a manuscript → supervisor, reading
- How to search for references → supervisor, colleagues
- How to add references into the manuscript → colleagues
- Which journal to publish in → supervisor

Experiences from first article

- Had to learn a lot on the job (colleagues, supervisor & reading)
- Long process to figure out the *story*, and to write it up
- Several drafts
- A lot of work (combined with your main job & family life)
- The rewards were worth it!

Experiences of being a co-author

- Much easier (less work, less pressure)
- A great opportunity to learn *how things are done*
- Do not take it personal when your suggestions are *ignored*
- Make an effort to contribute/be relevant
- Not as much credit as *first author*

Barriers to being *first author* for junior scientists

- No or limited access to data (reviews are a good solution)
- Limited skills in data analysis and interpretation, so as to figure out the *story* to tell
- Lack of support from supervisors – timely review of drafts
- Time constraints (Day job + family + studies + *side-hustle*)

The good news – it gets easier with practice

- Learn skills – from colleagues, reading, workshops, training
 1. Search for databases (Pubmed, Google Scholar)
 2. Using referencing software (endnote)
 3. Data analysis
- Practice, practice, practice!!!

Challenges that persist

- *Protected time* to write
- Dealing with rejection from journals
- Writer's block (feel stuck - do not know what/how to write)
- Who should be a co-author?
- When co-authors do not agree (content, style)

Rewards of publishing

- Share knowledge, advance research & improve health
- Career progression (win grants, promotions)
- Invitation to conferences – great for networking (collaborators)
- Increased visibility → expert in a subject matter
- **So, make the time, practice and persevere!**



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Thank you!

