

# Editorial

Victor Grech

“To state that those who don't publish may as well not do the work in the first place is undeniably harsh, though not unreasonable”.

The Faculty of Medicine and Surgery will be holding the IX Malta Medical School Conference at the Hilton Malta Hotel, St Julians between 3 - 5 December 2015. The conference habitually grows from strength to strength, thanks not only to the hard work of successive organizing committees, but also to the participants. These are young and old, doctors and other health care professions, all of whom recognize the importance of showcasing their research.

The number of abstracts submitted increases each time, and indeed this year, a record number of abstracts (over 900) have been tendered.

An open talk with regard to abstract preparation has already been given to all interested parties. For the purposes of furthering the quality of submitted research and presentations, another open talk regarding the preparation of posters and PowerPoint presentations will also be given shortly.

This is all well and good but it does not detract from the fact that “unless it is published, it is as if your research has never been done.” This is a favourite adage of this editor, one that is repeated ad nauseam at every opportunity. This is also the universal viewpoint of all academics. “To state that those who don't publish may as well not do the work in the first place is undeniably harsh, though not unreasonable”.<sup>1</sup> The workplace and academia are increasingly competitive and “publish or perish”, an exhortation that has been with us in medicine for decades,<sup>2</sup> has arguably never been more applicable.

The reverse hardly ever occurs, and indeed, the physicist Wolfgang Pauli reportedly admonished a colleague, “I don't mind your thinking slowly. I mind your publishing faster than you can think”.<sup>1</sup>

Each abstract that remains unpublished is regrettable, and constitutes what is in effect a “scientific crime”.<sup>1</sup> This is because research (usually funded) is lost, and those of us who receive funding have an obligation to publish our work. In addition, writing up one's research forces the researcher to organize and think about work done as well as in progress, sometimes in ways hithertofore unimagined. Furthermore, the peer review process that comprises part of parcel of publication exposes unnoticed mistakes and sharpens one's work.

Dear colleagues, one final exhortation: do write up and publish your work – do not let your efforts go to waste.

## References

1. Clapham,P. "Publish or perish." *BioScience* 2005;55:390-391.
2. Brandon AN. Publish or Perish. *Bull Med Libr Assoc.* 1963; 51: 109–110.

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### Cover Picture:

‘Nude’

*Watercolour*

**By** Christian Camilleri

Christian Camilleri is an anaesthesia trainee who began painting in childhood. His preferred medium and subject consist of watercolour figures, portraits and battle scenes. He derives inspiration from both Baroque and early 20th Century sources.