

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Recent studies in several disciplines reveal that journal authorship patterns have changed considerably in the last 20 years. Evidence suggests that the pattern has gone from predominantly single authorships to a combination of co- and multiple authorships. To date, there have been no systematic studies in nursing *per se*, although there have been studies in related disciplines such as medicine and life sciences. I decided, therefore, to launch an investigation in nursing. I chose *The Canadian Journal of Nursing Research* as my target journal because it is the oldest national refereed journal in nursing that is devoted almost exclusively to research in the field.

I examined all major articles from 1970 to 1991. Excluded were abstracts, book reviews, briefs submitted to commissions, critiques, and rebuttals, editorials, letters to the editor, reports of conference proceedings, special columns such as "Query and Theory" or "Viewpoint," tributes, and works with an unspecified number of authors. The data were grouped into one seven-year interval and three five-year intervals as follows: 1970-1976, 1977-1981, 1982-1986, and 1987-1991. Each interval contained 20 issues. A record sheet for each of the intervals was compiled. The number of authors, that is, single, double, and multiple for each of the years and for the total period was calculated. Then the number of authors was converted to percentages for each year and for the total period.

I found that nursing was not unlike other disciplines, that it too has experienced changes in authorship patterns. Specifically, single authorships accounted for nearly 82% of all publications during the 1970-1981 period. However, the pattern shifted in 1982. In particular, co- and multiple authorships combined accounted for about 43% of all publications between 1982 and 1986. This number further increased to approximately 66% between 1987 and 1991. This means, in essence, that there has been a dramatic reversal in authorship patterns in the *CJNR* in the last 10 years.

Reasons for this increase in collaborative publication are speculative, but as a rule, are attributed to three factors. First, is the ever-increasing pressure on nursing faculty to "publish or perish". Second, is the ever-increasing complexity of nursing research itself, and third, is the increase in the mentorship of graduate students.

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