

## Book Review

### **How to Publish in Biomedicine**

500 Tips for Success

Jane Fraser

Published 1997 Radcliffe Medical Press,

Abingdon. vi + 216 pages

ISBN 1 85775 193 0 £16.50

Dr Jane Fraser has written this book, subtitled 500 tips for success, from her experiences as an editorial director and in helping and tutoring scientists in writing research papers. This background to the book explains why it is a book to be read, rather than kept as a reference to any particular aspect of the writing. The book does have conventional chapter headings but the chapters consist of bulleted paragraphs, each one making its own point often independent of its neighbours. After reading the book, or just dipping into it, the reader may discover something valuable that he had not been looking for, hence my feeling that it is more akin to a workshop than a reference book.

Many of the points made are common-sense to many people, although that does not mean they do not bear repeating; indeed if only all authors would do as Dr Fraser suggests and read the target journal's instructions to authors, then more papers would be processed more quickly by the publishing process.

I would not wholeheartedly agree with everything Dr Fraser says. Some advice may be relevant to the journals Dr Fraser has most experience with, but would not apply to this one. Although it may be an ideal to "blind" referees to the identity and address of the authors, I doubt if this could be true of most journals; the impracticality of such a scheme, even if actually desirable, should not be underestimated. An appendix on the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals" may give the impression that all journals subscribe to the Vancouver style described therein, although some journals consider other conventions superior. These sort of differences underline my own belief that the best guide for writing a scientific paper is a copy of any recent issue of the targeted journal.

There is an interesting section on what to do if your paper is rejected. This is a tricky subject when giving advice. On the one hand the referees and editor may be wrong to reject, but I am not sure of the wisdom of providing advice on how to go about getting a poor paper accepted. By retrospective improvement of the statistics for instance?

This review is not intended to be carping or negative. The book is well worth a read. Read it and take the general advice on board when it is common-sense. Make sure any specific advice is applicable in your particular case.

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

## Book Review

### **Apotheker-Kalender 1998**

(Calendar for Pharmacists 1998)

Edited by Wolfgang-Hagen Hein & Werner Dressendörfer

Published 1997 Deutscher Apotheker Verlag,

Stuttgart. 12 Colour plates

ISBN 3 7692 2209 1 DM 48.00 sFr 48.00

Despite personal computers that can helpfully remind you of the time and date in a corner of the screen, this cannot replace the pleasure of having an attractive calendar on a handy wall in the office. Most of us may depend on receiving a passable such calendar from a business contact over Christmas. Occasionally you may find one worth buying for yourself. The German publishers, Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, have produced a splendid example of a modern calendar that

would grace any wall. Entitled "Apotheker-Kalender" (or Calendar for Pharmacists), each month depicts a work of art associated with pharmacy through various ages, and drawn from several European museums and libraries. Detailed descriptions are given in both German and English on the back. The plates vary from an enlarged version of Thomas Rowlandson's "The Quack" to a photograph of a reconstructed 18th century pharmacy in the museum of Zurich University. This variety of subject, although all under the broad umbrella of pharmaceutical topics, means that each month will provide a fresh delight for those who can resist peeking ahead.

At DM 48, the price may be high for individual purchasers. Perhaps you may be lucky enough to receive one from that business contact.

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN