

## PREFACE

This book has evolved from a series of workshops organized for first year post-graduate students by the Medical Education Unit of the University College of Medical Sciences. The objective of the workshops was to introduce them to the basics of biomedical research as a prelude to writing a protocol for a thesis, and subsequently to writing the thesis itself. As the numbers of post-graduate admissions increased exponentially in 2009, the three day “thesis writing workshop” was split into two one-and-a-half day workshops; the first a protocol writing workshop at the beginning of first year of residency, and the second a thesis writing workshop, some three months prior to thesis submission.

To maintain the true character of a hands-on workshop, with more time for group exercises than for didactic lectures/presentations, each workshop was conducted for batches of only up to 35 participants. Four identical workshops in sequence over a week, gave us the opportunity to groom more workshop faculty, the result of which is visible in the depth of academic talent in the list of authors in this book. Today our institution can boast of at least three independent teams capable of conducting these workshops.

As word of our workshops spread, we began receiving requests from other institutions to conduct them for their students; however, it quickly became clear that we could not possibly do justice to too many each year. At the same time there appeared to be a dearth of resources dealing with thesis writing - something that could serve as a self-help tool for the beginner. In this setting it appeared rational to write this book. As with our workshops, this book is written for the novice desirous of entering the research arena: for whom a thesis is mandatory, undergraduate students wishing to venture into research by way of summer projects and working with supportive faculty, and in fact, any beginner in research. It can be used as a bench manual - to be referred to at every stage of working on a thesis. It may also be useful to thesis supervisors, and institutions wishing to design and administer their own training workshops similar to ours.

The text is organized into 26 chapters which follow the sequence of events in engaging with a thesis. A unique feature is the numerous examples in each chapter illustrating what to do, and often, what not to do. The language is simple, the style conversational, and we hope, easy to follow. A bibliography is provided at the end of each chapter for those wishing to delve further into the intricacies of biomedical research.

We hope the readers will find answers to many of their questions related to the thesis; that the book arouses their curiosity, propelling them to further their reading, and continues to be a useful reference whenever they contemplate research.

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