

The Importance of Publication

By Prof. Bruce Budowle

“ Publication is the currency of science “

Forensic science, i.e., the application of science in criminal and civil investigations, is an enticing field to many people. It may be the appealing role it plays in the entertainment industry, books and the news about mysteries, crime scene investigations, or even human evolution and historical events that draws a person to the field. Additionally, it could be the contribution forensic science makes to improving the quality of life by solving crime, humanitarian efforts to identify the missing or human remains, combatting gender-based violence and human trafficking to name a few of its impacts. These life important issues motivate some people to seek careers in forensic science so they can make a difference, help others, and/or envision becoming sleuths. Whether one wants to be a forensic practitioner or a researcher, he/she has chosen to be a scientist. In science one of the best ways to communicate, network and grow is through scientific publication. If anything, publication is the currency of science; but it is much more.

Foremost, scientists have the opportunity to convey their ideas, findings, and interpretations to the scientific community in one of the most effective manners of communication. It is the epitome of documenting work, obtaining knowledge and progressing science and innovation. The constructive exchange through publication and peer review checks the validity of the work and monitors the interest in the work while offering objectivity (and realistically also subjectivity) regarding the hypotheses, goals, findings, direction and/or conclusions proffered.

“ Publication creates a Network ”

Publications create a network that reaches a worldwide audience and allows scientists to find others who share similar interests that will enable them to validate and improve upon their work, in other words contribute and at the same time grow professionally. Through publication a scientist's skills and personal professional value are showcased, creating opportunities to collaborate and become part of a greater team network. Collaboration fosters exchanging ideas, sharing of knowledge, and leveraging of resources such that all parties benefit with increased productivity. A scientist is more successful and accessible through the publication avenue.

Along the way, publication also hones scientists' skills. It drives scientists to organize their thoughts in concise, cogent manners so they can communicate the project, report, review, policy, or



Prof. Bruce Budowle hosted two workshops at the Forensic DNA Event Series in the West Africa Region - Accra, Ghana 2022

position. The ability to engage effectively with clarity and brevity will enhance a scientist's professionalism and to become more successful in publishing as well as be more competitive for funding to support projects or running a program. Moreover, publication can establish credibility, if a good idea is presented, is well thought out, and depicts good quality work.

“ Publication can establish credibility ”

Lastly, many scientists want to make a personal contribution to the desired field of interest and do something that matters. They can help solve serious problems that plague society and stimulate others, whether they be colleagues, decision makers or the next generations, to become involved in an informed manner and also solve urgent societal problems. You too can be part of the solution by engaging and communicating.

To publish, scientists need to decide on what topics to carry out their work. Obviously, scientists should work on topics of which they are passionate. Most scientists think of research as generating data in a laboratory which requires resources. If the resources are available, then by all means scientists should make use of them. However, such costly resources may not always be accessible. However, in today's world low funding does not have to be an impediment. Large amounts of very useful data are quite accessible, and researchers can make use of these public data to carry out exquisite projects. There are many opportunities for scientists in developing countries to pursue their dreams and develop professionally. Publication of your ideas and work can bring a huge impact on your own lives and that of others who seek to make a difference.

Dr. Bruce Budowle has worked with the FBI, been Director of the Center for Human Identification, is one of the original architects of CODIS and holds a rare academic distinction as Regents Professor for the impact of his extensive body of work.