

Strategies to promote scholarship among academic hospitalists

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Abstract

Academic hospitalists play an integral role in the day-to-day care of hospitalized patients, education and research. They are well-positioned to engage in scholarly and research activities and inform clinical practice. Hospital medicine also offers a compelling career path for those seeking to maintain a broad clinical focus while also pursuing opportunities in quality improvement (QI), clinical research, and medical education (MedEd) projects. Participation in these endeavors not only foster scholarly growth but also enhances career satisfaction for hospitalists. Therefore, there is a need to explore and implement feasible strategies to equip hospitalists with the knowledge and resources necessary to generate scholarship and promote academic growth within the field.

Key words: Scholarship; Mentorship; Faculty development; Academic hospitalist; Promotion

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Main text

‘Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things.’ —Peter Drucker.

Scholarship plays a vital role in career advancement and job satisfaction in academic medicine (Renner et al, 2022). Academic hospitalists juggle multiple responsibilities, including patient care, education, research, and administrative duties, making it challenging to dedicate enough time for scholarly projects. A lack of scholarship is a common barrier to academic promotion (Sumarsono et al, 2021). Academic hospitalists who use existing patient care and educational opportunities for academic recognition can more efficiently and effectively achieve their career goals by prioritising actions that align with those goals (Schrager and Sadowski, 2016; Lin, 2024).

Efficiency refers to the ability to complete a task in the least amount of time and resources, whereas effectiveness entails prioritising tasks to achieve desired goals within the constraints of time and resources.

Scholarship from everyday work

A simple strategy to promote scholarly productivity is to identify opportunities from day-to-day clinical and educational work. An interesting case seen with a residents and students during a work week can be used for teaching and mentoring learners and also potentially lead to presentation at society meetings, as well as peer reviewed publications. Furthermore, an interesting case with relevant images (such as radiological, pathological, endoscopic, or pictures of rash) can be submitted to a journal for publication in the clinical images section (Schrager and Sadowski, 2016; Lin, 2024).

Another way to use daily work for scholarly activity is through quality improvement (QI) projects. Faculty members who are interested in QI can engage in projects that address issues observed in their daily clinical practice. Common examples include projects aimed at improving safety and quality, such as reducing fall rates, minimising medication errors, preventing hospital-acquired infections, or improving patient satisfaction. Conducting retrospective studies on various clinical outcomes offers another opportunity to increase scholarly productivity. Similarly, clinician educators with innovative teaching and mentoring methods can design programmes or curricula to enhance medical education for residents. Sharing these innovations through presentation and can aid in maximising scholarly output while minimising time investment. A variety of other scholarly activities, which may include, but are not limited to, developing faculty development or mentorship programmes,

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establishing wellness clubs to tackle burnout, initiatives to promote diversity and leadership, or engaging in narrative or graphic medicine can also serve as catalysts for academic recognition. Given the rising importance of artificial intelligence (AI), collaborating with data scientists in developing AI tools for workflow optimisation or predictive models for clinical outcomes is another potential consideration. Letters to the editor or brief reports can serve as alternatives to full manuscripts for publication purposes. Review articles offer additional avenues for disseminating literature on topics of interest that don't require direct patient interaction. These efforts can all provide opportunities to present at meetings and subsequently publish findings.

The power of making every effort count

The key to maximising efficiency and effectiveness lies in making 'every effort count twice or thrice' (Schrager and Sadowski, 2016). A scholarly project presented at regional meetings can be also presented at national platforms within allowable medical society guidelines. Workshops, innovative practices in health care delivery or education, retrospective research projects or QI initiatives, or intriguing case reports can eventually find their way into peer-reviewed journals. Embracing this snowball effect of scholarship opens doors to regional and national recognition, crucial for promotion and career advancement (Schrager and Sadowski, 2016; Sumarsono et al, 2021).

Tips and tricks

Identifying collaborators and mentors

It is important to acknowledge the fact that 'You Can't Do It All' and that working in isolation is not sustainable. Collaborating with colleagues, medical students, or residents on projects not only eases workload, but also cultivates a sense of mutual support and fulfilment. Identifying projects of interest and finding mentors to support the idea, followed by developing a plan of action, is key (Schrager and Sadowski, 2016; Lin, 2024). Mentors and collaborators play pivotal roles in supporting scholarly productivity and career advancement.

Prioritising career goals

As an early career faculty, it is essential to prioritise requests for time that align with personal career goals. Learning to say 'No' to things that do not support these goals is crucial (Schrager and Sadowski, 2016).

Time management

Multi-tasking is a misnomer and finding time to write amid clinical duties may be difficult. Therefore, it is important to designate time to write by minimising time spent on unimportant tasks that distracts from completing scholarly projects (Schrager and Sadowski, 2016).

Developing dissemination plan

Developing a dissemination plan is also vital to facilitate the translation of the project into practice. Utilising appropriate platforms such as journals, meetings, and social media ensures that findings reach the widest possible audience. Effective dissemination of scholarship is important to build regional and national reputation that is required for promotion.

In conclusion, achieving success in academia goes beyond completing tasks correctly—it's about prioritising the most important ones. Academic hospitalists can enhance their scholarly productivity by leveraging their usual clinical and educational experiences, and establishing effective collaborations and dissemination plans.

Key points

- Scholarship and Mentorship are critical for career advancement among academic hospitalists.
- Scholarly productivity can be difficult to achieve, given the competing challenges of the clinical and non-clinical responsibilities.
- Strategies of getting scholarship from everyday work can be the effective solution for academic hospitalists who are juggling between multiple roles.

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Availability of data and materials

All data included in this study are available upon request by contact with the corresponding author.

Author contributions

PJ, SB and BS made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the work and the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of data for the work. PJ, SB and BS drafted the manuscript. All authors contributed to important editorial changes of important content in the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. All authors have participated sufficiently in the work and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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