Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Encourages Student Research Submissions

Most nurse practitioner students are required to complete a research thesis or project in order to achieve their advanced degree. Many of these students do not know that taking a few additional steps after the research and writing could lead to publication in a widely respected academic journal.

The Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (JAANP) is a monthly, peer-reviewed, professional journal that serves as the official publication of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). It publishes timely, original, peer-reviewed articles addressing clinical practice and management, health policy, research and education affecting nurse practitioners and other primary health care providers.

Charon Pierson has been editor of the JAANP since 2000 and has received many submissions from student authors. Some of them are well done but unfortunately, many are not.

“One of my big concerns as JAANP editor is that nurse practitioner program faculty often require students to write and submit articles to journals such as the JAANP without mentoring them so that they can be successful,” said Pierson.

Nurse practitioner students are often in a different position from other students of nursing in that they have already had a professional nursing career with a clinical background. Many, when enrolling in a nurse practitioner program, already have a research topic in mind for their thesis.

A particular faculty mentor has helped several Master’s student papers find their way to publication by the JAANP. Claire DeCristofaro, MD, is an Associate Professor in the MS(N) Program, School of Nursing, College of Health and Human Sciences at Western Carolina University.

“Student authors can be successful but proper faculty mentoring is a crucial element of that success,” Pierson said. “Dr. DeCristofaro really does that well.”

DeCristofaro works to mentor students during their research and writing and assists students with article submissions. While the intimidation factor can be high, she said, nurse practitioner students can reap significant benefits from publishing a research paper in a respected journal such as the JAANP.

“Publishing can be very favorable in terms of job impact,” DeCristofaro said. “It is a measure of overall ability of a job candidate. It can open doors by impressing potential employers, and it is excellent for students on an academic track or working in large hospital settings, where an NP is likely to be part of a research team.”

The most successful student publishers, according to DeCristofaro, are the ones who have a personal interest in a clinical or political topic. The drive to communicate a message can be a powerful factor in navigating the publication process.

DeCristofaro recommends working with a faculty mentor both for the research process as well as publication. She suggests meeting with a science librarian for assistance with literature searches and encourages student researchers to contact thought leaders in their field or topic of choice.
“Academics and other leaders tend to like to help students,” she said. “They are often happy to devote some of their time to a conversation about their field of expertise.”

Her biggest message to students? You are already doing the hard work in writing your research paper in the first place.

“The hard part is the research and writing! It takes very little additional time to submit that research to a journal,” DeCristofaro said. “Sometimes students will be working on a hot topic or a true innovation and journals like to have the opportunity to publish it.”

The JAANP is different from other journals in its inclusive perspective. It recognizes that NPs and other clinicians may be working in a variety of settings. It also includes a range of article types, from NP education to clinical topics to political and legislative issues. Most other journals are clinically focused and do not cover other topics.

Additionally, the impact factor of the JAANP rose last year for the third time in a row to 0.908. The JAANP is currently the only nurse practitioner journal accepted into the impact factor rating system, maintained by Thomson Reuters.

A journal’s impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which an average journal article has been cited in a particular year. It can help readers and authors understand a particular journal’s importance in the field.

AANP members receive copies of the monthly journal at no charge, as well as free online access to the articles through the journal’s publisher, Wiley-Blackwell. Student members receive free online access.

For more information about the JAANP, go to www.wiley.com and search for “JAANP.”