

Editorial

Hi,

I think we all know that we are late. We are not late only for a scientific journal owned by the members of the Turkish Society of Medical Genetics (TSMG), we, as nation, are also late for all aspects of science; late for basic (pure) science, late for applied science, late for collaborative science, late for education of science and finally late for writing of science. Yes, writing... It has always been difficult for us. It is not academic writing what I mean; expressing your thoughts, ideas, researches and projects.

Please remember what they said for our nation all the time: "You are a great nation, which makes a great history, but leaves it always unwritten". Our grandfathers left us a great fortune behind, unwritten, and of course, forgotten. A fortune of science, a fortune of literature, a fortune of remedy, a fortune of life...All fallen into oblivion.

In my early years in Cerrahpaşa, five years ago a professor of Medical History said: "To what degree Ottoman Medicine reached in hundreds of years, we are just speechless." and she continued her conversation talking how some western scientists benefited from the knowledge they learned from the Ottoman scriptures on herbal medicine, particularly for cancer therapy. She said this collaboration brought them many scientific rewards.

Prof. Oktay Sinanoğlu died couple of days ago. We are talking about a 28-year-old Turkish scientist who became full professor for the first time at this young age in the Yale's past. He devoted his later life to emphasize the importance of expressing people's own thoughts and ideas in their native language.

Okay. I can hear you, truly asking: "if the language you are expressing your ideas or studies is not that important, why you are struggling to write this editorial in English, which is not the language you heard from your mother since babyhood". I know, some of you from different backgrounds will find many grammatical and typing errors within this little text. This is not edited by a native English speaker at all. Well, first of all, we prefer papers submitted in English that we would like the world to hear what we are doing in this part of the world. Secondly, we would like other colleagues from different parts of the globe to contribute to our journal in order not to only publish their study, but also to establish a stronger relationships and future collaborations with them. Thirdly, we are not strict in English. Our first priority is to encourage our colleagues to write their scientific ideas, thoughts, hypotheses, experiences, projects, results and studies in the area of Human Genetics, no matter of their level of English or scientific language. As board members of TSMG, we are asking all fellow members not to hesitate to send their work to their very own journal. Our scientific board is ready to

positively review and discuss your work in order to make it a better shape and to find an opportunity to publish it in *Medical Genetics*. This is definitely meant to be a training process rather than a soulless, time consuming and heart breaking experience for all of us.

I would not be wrong if I state that the genetics is the most dynamic branch of science in the last decades. Can you imagine James Watson of double helix is still alive and he was among us in Istanbul a few years ago ! Now, by the help of new sequencing technologies, thousands of people's whole genomes are being sequenced all around the world now, dropping the cost from 1 billion American dollars per genome to a couple of thousand dollars ! We, geneticists of Turkey, are not only in the middle of the East, but also in the middle of this "crazy" dynamism, which needs to be shared by writing. Just a friendly reminder, a Professor named Thameem Dheen from National University of Singapore has just visited us in Cerrahpaşa yesterday, strongly recommending 'Translational Research' as prompter in Turkey, which is a necessity to encourage clinicians into the basic sciences. Translational research aims to "translate" findings in basic research into medical and nursing practice and meaningful health outcomes.

When I started my postdoc in the National Institutes of Health (NIH), I told my mentor Dr. Leslie Biesecker that Anatolia could have possess the genomic knowledge from every possible ethnic backgrounds with great diversity more than even United States. He was looking at my face, totally surprised. "A country more diverse than even US !". It is a pity that, even though much genomic data is being collected by genome sequencing and SNP arrays in this "next generation sequencing" era, much of this diversity from many parts of Turkey still waits to be discovered using like HapMap projects and national genome projects. All these projects would be achieved by collaboration and sharing as Prof. Milan Macek of European Society of Human Genetics once stated: "Genetics became a multidisciplinary science, requiring collaborations between many branches of science more than ever". The term "multidisciplinary" does not cover only life sciences but it also includes pure science, social science and all areas of applied sciences. *Medical Genetics* will be a kind of conference platform or "University" containing many areas of science. Remember, Francis Collins, the Head of the NIH and Human Genome Project, was a chemists and completed his PhD in Physical Chemistry at age 24 before becoming a physician. This does not mean all scientists in bio-medical research be first interested in pure science before becoming a bio-medical scientist. What I mean is that scientific journals are kind of "universities", which are the "ecosystem" of universal knowledge from many aspects of life. The term "scientific ecosystem" came to my mind from Mr. Yasin Erol, the Head of Istanbul University Teknokent A.Ş., meaning bringing ideas of

many kind as much as together in order to come from "nearly nothing" to reality within the same "physical" environment.

From the journal publishing point of view, we are inviting contributions from many areas of pure sciences, life sciences, social sciences etc. Not only geneticists and bio-medical researchers, scientists from the areas of mathematics to information technologies, from computer sciences to bioinformatics, from physical chemistry to mechanical engineering, from materials science to nanotechnology are all welcome to submit their work as long as their subjects are relevant with Human Genetics.

I wrote that the advanced knowledge was a possession of our civilization. In reality, knowledge is the possession of all mankind. Wherever it is, it is worth to pursue it, use it and, absolutely, share it for the good of people. "Sharing the knowledge" is the key term for this journal. Knowledge was once a very own possession of these soils for hundreds of years. We lost it, the West took it, advanced it through renaissance and brought it to this stage. Now it is time to lead again.

The most important things in science are enthusiasm, collaboration and hard work. My PhD mentor in Britain, James Parry was first asking to his PhD candidates: "Do you have an enthusiasm for what you want to do?". He was asking this question even before looking at the candidate's resume or letters of recommendation. Remember the parents of a child with adrenoleukodystrophy in the movie "Lorenzo's Oil" were diplomats, meaning the guys were millions of miles away from bio-medical sciences. What made them successful to make the life-saving discovery for their son and all humanity was "desperation", "need", "passion", "hard work" and, most of all, "love". An unconditional love! What we need is this level of love and passion to be able to fill this huge gap with the rest of the world in scientific terms, and in our case, in academic writing. It is hard, but not impossible. All we need is, as relatively small scientific community, to stick together, be collaborative and supportive whatever our backgrounds are, whatever our positions are and whatever our dreams are. Young colleagues are strongly encouraged to send their work, even though in their native Turkish. Languages will be edited in the coming issues. The quality of this unedited text should not be discouraging by the way. Though many years in the West, this is not my native language at the end !

For the beginning, the issues of *Medical Genetics*, the official publication of the Turkish Society of Medical Genetics, will be published electronically three times a year completely depending on the number of submissions. If other researchers nationwide and worldwide as well as our members of TSMG send their valuable works in increasing rate, we will definitely publish it more frequently and put this journal to the most effective indexes like Biotechnology Citation Index, Current Contents/Life

Sciences, EMBASE/*Excerpta Medica*, MEDLINE/*Index Medicus*, Reference Update, Research Alert, Science Citation Index, SciSearch and Scopus. All other information about the journal can be found in the website.

This is a relay race. Someone starts and young ones or forever youngs pass the flag through generations.

I should thank my fellow board members of TSMG for their valuable support, and Prof. Şükrü Öztürk for giving me this opportunity for serving my country and for serving people of the world. The great effort of my assistants and fellow board members, Assoc. Prof. İbrahim Akalın and Assist. Prof. Hatip Aydın will always be remembered. The authors and reviewers of our first issue are definitely worth mentioning. First issues are always difficult, but, in fact, the most difficult job is "continuity". You know what they say around here: "Begin like a Turk, continue like an English". With great effort, I hope, we will throw this funny saying away to the recycle bin.

At the end of the words I turn back to the beginning, the language thing. Of course the "shape" and the "structure" of a text are important, but the most important thing is to be able to express the ideas. It is like the expression is more important than what writes in the code as the former makes the phenotype.

I remember my fellow PhD student friend in Swansea University, all of a sudden, started reciting something like a poem, but not in English or Turkish. It was in Persian, but flowing into my heart as if I was understanding the whole meaning. He said "Don't you know the poet of these words ?". I said "No, I don't even know the words". He replied smiling "How strange you don't know him! He is your Mevlana 'Rumi'. The words were:

"Come, come again, whoever you are, come !
Heathen, fire worshipper or idolatrous, come !
Come even if you broke your penitence a hundred times,
Ours is the portal of hope, come as you are"

Yes, these were foreign words from the great heritage of my glorious past, but love was all inside of me with no reason at all.

Let's start this *Medical Genetics* journey somewhere from our hearts; with love, the most universal language.

Celebrating hundredth anniversary of Çanakkale, I dedicate this work to the eternal memory of medical students of Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-yi Şahane, who all died as whole 1915 class during WWI.

Let's see what waits us ahead...

Sincerely,

Hakan Ulucan MD, PhD
Editor