Why Write?
To Impact Patient Care!

Someone once asked why I published so much. I did not consider myself a born writer, so it made me pause to think about it, especially because it took 27 iterations of my manuscript to be ready for my first publication (Scogna & Smalley, 1979) (and that was in the days before computers when each version had to be completely retyped)! I realized I wrote for my current and future patients and because I wanted to improve cancer care.

When I started my career as a cancer nurse more than 30 years ago, many of my patients died. But they were generous in what they taught me about their lives and their cancer experiences. Their gift to me was one that I felt compelled to share with others. I realized that I might be able to directly care for 10 patients, but I might be able to indirectly influence the care of another 100 if other nurses read my article and learned what my patients taught me. For example, I developed clinical expertise in treating patients with recombinant alpha-interferon when it first became available in the early 1980s. The side-effect profile, namely fatigue, was very different from that of chemotherapy. By sharing our experiences (Mayer & Smalley, 1983), we helped other nurses to be better prepared to administer the new treatment and to care for patients. As a Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing reader, I hope that you have found articles that help you do your job better.

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I am honored to be named the new editor of CJON. Assuming the role is a natural evolution for me as a cancer nurse—one that I look forward to doing as another way to improve cancer care. I heartily endorse the CJON mission and will use it to guide my tenure as editor.

References