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This article looks at authorship patterns in CJNR from 1970 to 1991. A tally was taken of the number of single, double and multiple authorships for each year which, in turn, were combined into one seven year and three five year intervals. Frequency counts were converted into percentages, chi-squares were computed, and author/article ratios were calculated for each year. Results revealed a decrease in the number of single authored articles and an increase in the number of co- and multiple authored articles from 1982 on. The author/article ratios fluctuated somewhat, but, overall showed marked increases. It was tentatively concluded that nursing is not unlike other disciplines, that it too is experiencing changes in authorship patterns. Reasons for the changes are tendered along with suggestions for further research.

Introduction

In recent years, the authorship patterns in journals have been examined in fields such as agriculture, anthropology, business and economics, counselling, education, finance, life sciences, medicine, and psychology.1–17 The studies themselves have varied in design, but all have come to the same conclusion. In short, there has been a significant increase in the number of two authored (i.e., co-, double, dual, joint) or three or more (i.e., multiple) authored articles, or both. The increases, though, have not been consistent. Some have supported, in part, de Solla Price’s18 predictions, others have not.

Reasons for the increase are attributed, as a rule, to three factors. First, is the increasing complexity of research.1, 6, 14, 16–17 The knowledge explosion combined with increased specialization and large, often interdisciplinary projects have forced researchers to share their expertise.

As experimental methods have become more complex, and as complex statistical analyses have warranted a knowledge of computer applications, the need and likelihood for researchers to work together has increased. Researchers have divided the work according to each author’s area of research expertise (e.g. subject matter, computer knowledge, methodology, statistics).16
Second, is the ever increasing pressure to "publish or perish". For example, Broad notes that James D. Watson was promoted to the rank of associate professor at Harvard in 1958 with only 18 papers. By 1981 that number had increased to between 50 and 100 papers. Today, the number required is probably even higher. This heightened pressure combined with an institutional reward structure that values single and dual authorships equally, as many do, no doubt, encourages collaborative publication.

And third, is the increase in the mentorship of graduate students. In recent years, the practice has become more common for without, "...an established record of publication, Ph.D. holders will have little opportunity to obtain a teaching or research position in higher education".

**Problem statement**

To date, there has been only one article in nursing and it was American. The purpose of this investigation, then, is to look at authorship patterns in a Canadian nursing journal, namely, The Canadian Journal of Nursing Research (CJNR). In particular, this study will address the following questions:

1. Have co-authorships increased in CJNR?
2. Have multiple authorships increased in CJNR?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the number of authors and date of publication?
4. Has there been a consistent increase in the author/article ratio?

**Literature review**

Brown, Tanner and Padrick examined trends and changes in nursing research over three decades. Their sample consisted of 137 articles in four research journals: Nursing Research, the International Journal of Nursing Studies, Research in Nursing and the Western Journal of Nursing Research. The periodicals were selected because they contained substantive research reports. Included were (1) 14 studies (articles and briefs) published in Nursing Research in 1952–1953, (2) 20 studies in Nursing Research in 1960, (3) 40 randomly selected studies in the 1970 issues of the four journals, and (4) 63 studies selected at random in the 1980 issues of the four journals.