

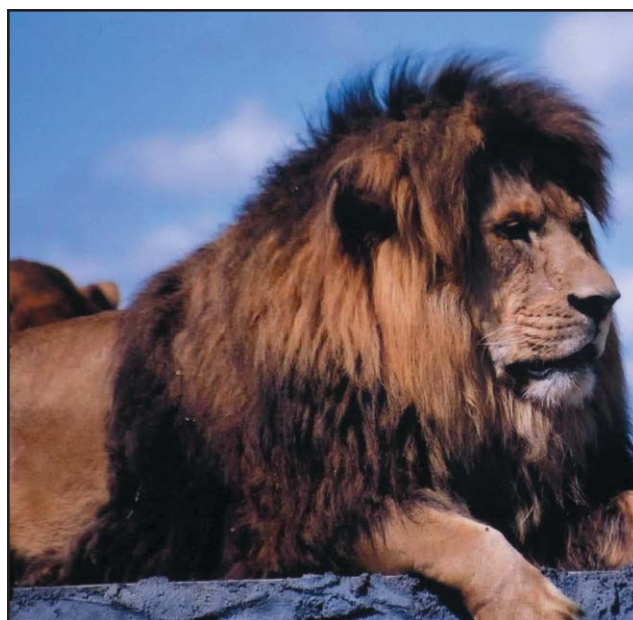
Beyond Pride in Teamwork

Scott E. Walker

Since earliest times, the lion — the “king of beasts” — has been one of the best known of wild animals. During the late Pleistocene Epoch (1.6 million to 10 000 years ago), lions ranged over all of North America and Africa, most of the Balkans, and across the Middle East into India. They disappeared from North America about 10 000 years ago, from the Balkans about 2000 years ago, and from Palestine during the Crusades. By the late 20th century their numbers had dwindled to a few tens of thousands, mainly in parts of Africa south of the Sahara.

Lions are unique among cats in that they live in groups called prides. A pride consists of several generations of lionesses, all of whom are related, their cubs, and one or two adult male lions, who defend the pride's territory and mate with the females. A pride may have as few as 4 or as many as 37 members, but about 15 is typical. It is the lionesses of the pride that do most of the hunting, sometimes in groups. Members of the pride encircle the prey, approaching from opposite directions and then closing in for the kill.

Many hospital pharmacy departments are similar in size to a pride and, if they are to function well, require the teamwork shown by a pride. The team within a department is integrated, dynamic, and complex. Furthermore, each hospital pharmacy department in the more than 750 institutions across Canada interacts with its counterparts at other institutions, which leads to a dynamic profession. The survival and growth of pharmacy as a profession depend on each member of each department's team and on our ability to advance our value within health care. This goal can be met only through research. Our profession needs to undertake and complete research to stay current, to remain efficient, and to continue to demonstrate our usefulness within health care. A profession that does not evaluate its future through active research declines to a technical status.¹ It should therefore be of great concern to us all that the number of poster presentations at the Professional Practice Conference has declined steadily in recent years (see table). This may be the first signal that we are not doing enough to stay current and remain efficient.



Poster Presentations at PPC

Year	No. of Posters*
1996	71
1997	50
1998	53
1999	47
2000	34
2001	42

*Does not include award-winning project abstracts.

It appears that teamwork is not enough. We must increase our research efforts to ensure our future prosperity. It is one thing to have personal power, to be the “king of beasts”, within your own institution. It is quite another to be part of a vibrant and growing profession in charge of its own destiny.

Reference

1. Einarson TR. The dilemma of clinical pharmacy research. *Can J Hosp Pharm* 1988;41:289-94.

Scott E. Walker, MScPhm, is Editor of *CJHP*.

Photo credit

Photograph from the personal files of Sandra A.N. Tailor, PharmD, Infectious Disease Coordinator, Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre. The photo was taken at African Lion Safari, Ontario, in July 2000.