

## EDITORIAL

### ChatGPT: To cite or not to cite?

**Kasun Bandara Ekanayake**

Soon after its first release by OpenAI in November 2022, the artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) went viral, attracting millions of users all over the world within days<sup>1</sup>. It was described as a trained model which can interact in a conversational way, answering follow-up questions, admitting its mistakes, challenging incorrect premises and rejecting inappropriate requests. However, the occasional generation of plausibly-sounding, but inaccurate or biased information and limited knowledge on events after 2021 were listed as its limitations<sup>2</sup>.

All hell broke loose among the scientific community when ChatGPT was cited as authors in several publications, ranging from a chatbot's perspective on the use of Rapamycin in the context of Pascal's Wager, to use of AI in nursing education<sup>3-6</sup>. Several reputed publishers such as Science, Elsevier and Springer responded promptly; updating their editorial policies stating that the program cannot be listed as an author. One of their main arguments against the use of the chatbot was the fact that an author is accountable for their contribution to the work and ChatGPT is unable to do so. They further elaborated that AI tools can be used to improve the readability and language of the work, but not to replace key functions that are performed by the authors, and also, any use of such tools should be declared<sup>7,8</sup>.

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) has, also, updated its authorship criteria in response to this problem at hand. When a manuscript is submitted to a journal, the authors should disclose whether they used any AI-assisted technologies when formulating the submitted

work. If such tools were used, the authors are required to indicate the extent they were used, in both the cover letter and the submitted work. However, AI-tools such as ChatGPT should not be listed as authors because they are not responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the work and the human authors are responsible for any AI-assisted work. ICMJE further instructs that the authors should review the work carefully as AI can generate authoritative-sounding output that can be incorrect, incomplete, or biased. Furthermore, AI-tools should not be listed as co-authors nor cited as an author in references<sup>9</sup>.

However there are ways that ChatGPT can contribute to the quality of scientific publications. Producing quality abstracts, providing structure and coherence to the content, improving language and writing style, and facilitating collaboration among multiple authors of different backgrounds and expertise, are some of the useful attributes of AI tools that would enhance the scholarly output of the academia<sup>10</sup>.

Although AI tools such as ChatGPT are unlikely to be cited as authors in scientific publications in the near future, one day this fluent but flaky<sup>7</sup> chat box of a child could evolve into a sane adult speaker. That day might be closer than we think. For the time being, the Sri Lanka Journal of Forensic Medicine, Science & Law would follow the steps laid down by the giants in the publishing arena.

**Kasun Bandara Ekanayake**

[kasun1992eka@gmail.com](mailto:kasun1992eka@gmail.com)

*Department of Forensic Medicine,  
Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya,  
Sri Lanka*

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