Preface

Publish or perish (POP) has become a global phenomenon, as universities worldwide put pressure on academic staff to publish or perish, where 'perish' could be anything from denial of promotion to passing away. The doctrine of publish or perish may be advocated on the grounds that a good track record in publications brings attention to the authors and their institutions, which can facilitate continued funding and the progress of those authors. However, the perceived advantages of POP pale into insignificance compared to the adverse consequences of guiding academia by the rules of this doctrine.

Having lived through the culture of publish and perish for over 25 years, I thought that writing a book on the subject would be a stimulating exercise, and so it has been. The book covers not only the concept and consequences of POP but also related topics. For example, an ingredient of the publish-or-perish culture is the wasteful activity of journal ranking. Another issue is that whether an academic publishes or not may lie entirely out of his or her control and in the hands of people, called referees, whom the author does not even know. Another issue that goes hand in hand with the publish-or-perish culture is that universities are allocated public funds as drips via some costly but ineffective and not impartial research evaluation programmes. All of these topics are dealt with in detail in the ten chapters of this book. It is also demonstrated that the publish-or-perish doctrine is a product of the dominance of the neoliberal, free-market approach to economic activity and that its emergence coincided with the Reagan–Thatcher 'counter-revolution'.

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Naturally, I am the only one responsible for any errors and omissions that may be found in this book. It is dedicated to my daughter, Nisreen, my son, Danny, and my grandson, Ryan.

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