

## HOW TO WRITE A SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE FOR A MEDICAL JOURNAL?

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### SUMMARY

*Writing for a medical journal is an exciting moment because it represents the outcome and recognition of an arduous process. Only through a clear and thorough writing can a research be translated properly to clinical practice for the benefit of the patient community. Writing an article by an author and publishing an article by an editor are both key quality issues. Both of them should know the expectations of each other. The article highlights the guidelines of a good writing so that it won't be rejected by any journal.*

*"Not all who look at a journal are going to read even one article in it; Writers must know therefore what turns a looker in to a reader"*

*J. W. Howie<sup>2</sup>*

Research is essential for the growth and development of any medical science. Only through sound, scientific and educational research can new and old ideas get tested, thus guarding against stagnation and dogmatism. In order to achieve its goal of becoming useful to the community, the research has to be translated and applied to the patients in the day today clinical practice.

The challenge faced by the practising physician today is to provide up to date medical care to his patients by incorporating the valid, new information.<sup>2</sup> The role played by the scientific articles in the translation of research into clinical practice need not to be emphasized as it is the only available path for the up date of any speciality.

There has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of medical journals published in the last one decade and there has been an increasing demand for the scientific articles. Every year 6 million scientific medical articles get published. Despite this gargantuan volume of medical literature, less than 15% all articles published on a particular topic are useful<sup>3</sup>. Even articles published in the most prestigious journals are far from perfect. Analyses of clinical trials published in a wide variety of journals have described large deficiencies in the design, analysis and reporting. Although improving with time, average quality score of clinical trials during the past 2 decades is less than 50%.<sup>4,5,6</sup> The researches thus, must take the

personal responsibility of providing a valid, readable, scientific material.

Conveying one's research findings is an exciting moment because it represents the out come and recognition of an arduous process. Clarity in reporting how the research was conducted and what results were obtained is paramount both for the research community and for the medical practitioners. Only through clear and thorough writing can the clinicians transfer the benefit of the research to the patients and to fellow researchers eventually to explore the topic one step further. It is through the correctly written article that the clinicians appreciate the concepts being developed and judge the extent to which results can be applied in their setting. The results serve as basis on which clinical actions can be planned and implemented. Thus, a healthy and productive cycle is created between theory and clinical practice:theory-practice-theory<sup>7</sup>.

Another potent stimulus, rather a compulsion for any body to write a scientific paper is an albeit, misplaced, universal emphasis on 'publications' as a criteria of determining competence and suitability for academic positions. Papers written solely for this purpose contribute significantly for the low quality publications.

The common deficits found in the articles written in our county are due to poorly planned and conducted research and poorly presented research. A poorly designed and conducted research can never yield a worthwhile paper and therefore due attention must be given to this aspect at the conception stage. It is beyond the scope of this lecture to discuss about how to conduct a good research. Let us assume that a scientifically valid research has been conducted and the aim of this lecture is to highlight the art of presentation of a well conducted study, so that it will not be rejected by any journal.

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# How To Write A Journal Article

**M Lipman**



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