

Tips for Authors

1. The likelihood of publication (where you would like) relates to:

- The question you set out to study
- The study methodology (design, data collection, analysis...)
- How you present your findings

2. Starting to Write: Timing

- Avoid waiting for all the data to be in and analyzed!
- Start early with Introduction and Methods
- Plan major tables/figures; prepare these once data available, followed by text of Results, Discussion, Abstract

3. General guidelines

Length – Target 15 pages or less

- Title page (1)
- Abstract (1)
- Introduction (1)
- Methods (~4-5)
- Results (~3)
- Discussion (~3-4)

Be concise; avoid jargon

Introduction

- Summarize briefly key background information that makes the study question important
- Final sentence(s) should make clear the aim(s) of your study
- Usual length no more than a page (+/-)

Methods

Include clear description of:

- Primary and secondary aims (Should be clearly distinguished from post-hoc hypotheses)
- Study design
- Subjects (inclusion/exclusion criteria)
- Exposures and outcomes
- How data collected (including details of assays where relevant)
- Statistical analyses (tests used; criteria for statistical significance; power/sample size calculation)
- Include statement re IRB approval and informed consent.

- For industry sponsored trials, need to be clear re the role of industry. ie Note who (company versus non-industry authors) designed the study, collected the data, held and analyzed the data, wrote the manuscript, controlled the decision to publish; indicate explicitly whether investigators had full access to the data

Results

- Think through which results are critical to show in detail
- Present all relevant results in the results section
- Use tables and figures to summarize findings
- Include a table with subject characteristics (“Table 1”)
- Make clear main findings in the text, with reference to the tables and figures

Discussion

- Start by summarizing your main findings (1 paragraph)
- Put findings in context of relevant prior work (briefly..)
- Post-hoc findings should be acknowledged as such
- Address limitations
?possible confounding or bias, ?small study or short follow up? limited power for certain analyses? etc.. *Where possible, note available data to suggest these are not major flaws...*
- Comment on implications (but avoid excessive speculation)
- Conclude with concise summary

Abstract

- Background –why you did the study (1-2 sentences)
- Methods-- brief summary of the study design, population, what was measured (2-3 sentences)
- Results- Summarize major findings, with numbers/p values (3-4 sentences)
- Conclusions- Major take home point(s) (1 sentence)
- Overall <=250 words

3. Preparing for Submission

- Identify appropriate journal
- Follow instructions for authors
- All authors must meet criteria for authorship and must have signed off on manuscript
- Make editors aware/provide copies of related publications
- Address potential “conflicts of interest

4. Criteria for Authorship (ICMJE)

- All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed.

- Authorship (eg who will be one, and who will be senior author..) should be addressed as early as possible in the project
- Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content. One or more authors should take responsibility for the integrity of the work as a whole, from inception to published article.
- Authorship based on:
 - 1) Substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data
 - 2) Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and
 - 3) Final approval of the version to be published.

Conditions 1, 2, and 3 must all be met.

Acquisition of funding, the collection of data, or general supervision of the research group, by themselves, do not justify authorship

5. Redundant or Duplicate Publication (ICMJE)

- Definition: publication of a paper that overlaps substantially with one already published. NOT ok.
- The bases of this position are international copyright laws, ethical conduct, and cost-effective use of resources.
- Secondary publication ok only if:
 - The authors have received approval from the editors of both journals.
 - The priority of the primary publication is respected.
 - The paper for secondary publication is intended for a different group of readers; an abbreviated version could be sufficient.
 - The secondary version faithfully reflects the data and interpretations of the primary version.
 - The footnote on the title page of the secondary version indicates that the paper has been published in whole or in part and states the primary reference

6. Revision Process

- Address all concerns of the reviewers and editors.
- Include a detailed cover letter noting each point made by editor/reviewers, followed by statement on how you dealt with it (include page number..)
- Show all co-authors revised version and give opportunity for further input.
- Aim to do quickly

7. Summary

- Identify an interesting and focused question, for which positive or negative result of interest
- Enlist advice of others in study design
- Attend up front to feasibility, power, potential methodologic limitations
- Determine authorship early
- Start writing early, and have others provide comments on drafts
- Aim for concise and clear
- Target to appropriate journal, and be willing to revise and submit elsewhere.