How to Write a Paper for Publication: A Few Tips from an Editor
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1st Tip – Visualize Editor’s Desk

Before sending off the manuscript, visualize the editor’s desk.
Maximizing Your Paper’s Chances

Make sure your paper fits the journal’s interests.

The paper should have new findings and/or better research methods.

Simple important things: follow instructions to authors and eschew grammatical and spelling errors.
**2nd Tip – The Title**

Think hard about the paper’s title.

*It is the most read part of your work.*

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**Good Article Titles**

- Informative (remember computer indexes)
- Short (use subtitles if necessary)
- Catchy
Submitted
The Role of Upright Tilt Table Testing in the Diagnosis and Management of Convulsive Syncope Mimicking Epilepsy

Published
Differentiating Convulsive Syncope and Epilepsy with Head-Up Tilt Testing

When Should Patients with Lethal Ventricular Arrhythmia Resume Driving?
An Analysis of State Regulations and Physician Practices
3rd Tip – The Abstract

Spend effort on the abstract. It is the second-most read part of any article but usually dashed out at the last minute. Even if a journal does not require structured abstracts, get all parts in the abstract.

Structured Abstracts

**Original Research**
- Background
- Objective
- Design
- Setting
- Patients
- Intervention (if any)
- Measurements
- Results
- Limitations
- Conclusion

**Reviews**
- Purpose
- Data sources
- Study selection
- Data extraction
- Results
- Conclusion
4th Tip – Ensure Correct Length and Content of Paper’s Sections

Sections of a Research Article

1. Introduction (1/2 to 1 page)
   Capture interest
   Why your study is important
Sections of a Research Article

2. Methods
   - Study design (figure)
   - Place & date
   - Subjects (inclusion & exclusion)
   - Intervention details
   - Outcome measurements
   - Statistical analysis

The Language of Modern Clinical Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relative risk</td>
<td>RCT</td>
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<td>Attributable risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number needed to treat</td>
<td>Prevalence study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Confidence interval</td>
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<td>Precision</td>
<td>Intention-to-treat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confounding</td>
<td>Cost-effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity/ specificity</td>
<td>Meta-analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likelihood ratio</td>
<td>Multivariable analysis</td>
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</table>
3. Results
   - Baseline measurements of patients
   - Outcome results (figures)

4. Discussion (3-4 pages)
   - Summary of major results
   - Literature review
   - Strengths of study
   - Limitations of study
   - Generalizeability of results
   - Significance of study
5th Tip – Good Figures

A powerful way to summarize the results of a study.

Even if editor ultimately deletes it, a well-constructed figure can get across the message of the paper quickly.

Figures in papers can be much more complex than those in talks.

Good figures summarize the data clearly, but also give important details.

Results

% scores: Before-After

Mean initial score: 74%
Mean change: 7.3% ± 4%
$p = 0.0005$

Number of Manuscripts

Quality score
(Percentage of items rated ≥ 3)
6th Tip – Write More Clearly
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Fairly easy</td>
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<td>&gt;16</td>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>Legal contract</td>
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Readable English Writing

Words
- Short
- Learned early in life
- Anglo-Saxon origin
- Concrete meanings
- Non-technical
- Familiar

Sentences
- Short
- One idea per sentence
- Subject-verb-object construction
- No more than 3 numbers
- No more than 3 prepositional phrases

Readable of Manuscripts
Annals of Internal Medicine

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P<0.01
Summary for Authors

• Remember the editor’s desk
• Stress what is new/better in your paper
• Improve your titles
• Improve your abstracts
• Use strongest clinical research method
• Use short words and sentences
• “A (good) figure is worth a thousand words”