

How to write a scientific paper for publishing in medical journal

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Bangladesh, the eighth most populous country in the world with about 153 million people, has recently been applauded as an exceptional health performer.¹ As far as medical education is concerned, it can be very clearly perceived and appreciated that Bangladesh is achieving adequately in the academic arena as well. With the emergence of new medical journals, young researchers are inspired to undertake their work seriously and focus on publishing the findings. Conducting scientific research is only the beginning of the erudition of discovery. To make the results of research accessible to other professionals and the scientific community, it must be written well and published in a standard medical journal. It is important for the academic career of the researcher as well.

Writing for publication in a medical journal is a difficult task. A good medical literature is meant to be a piece of elite writing with the content well balanced in being informative, comprehensive and at the same time comfortable for the readers. This is definitely a tricky job. The most difficult task is being able to engage the reader's interest and communicate succinctly. Not all who look at a medical journal are going to read even one article in it. A writer must know, therefore, what makes the paper interesting for the readers. However the reality is that a reader would usually refer to a scientific literature for information and not entertainment. All these facts actually makes writing for a medical journal more complex than anything.

The basic principles of scientific writing are brevity, clarity, validity and simple mode of presentation. Writing a good scientific paper requires both creative energy and quiet reflective efforts engaging a considerable amount of author's time.

The range of medical writings encompasses conference presentations like abstracts, oral presentations, poster presentations etc. and journal articles like original articles, review articles, systematic review and meta analyses, current concept reviews, case reports, clinical suggestions and innovative technical practices etc. When the presentation is well conceived, before writing the manuscript, the target journal should be chosen. Each journal has its own

Before starting writing and manuscript preparation young authors should better consult with the checklists or guidelines that are available on the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) website (<http://www.icmje.org/>). The PRISMA checklist was developed for use when performing a meta analyses or systematic review.² A randomized controlled trial can be reported by the CONSORT guidelines.³ The STARD checklist may be used for designing a diagnostic accuracy study.⁴ To express the improvement of quality of health care in a community, one may use the SQUIRE guidelines.⁵ Protocols for different clinical trials can be designed following guidelines from SPIRIT statement.⁶ Observational studies in epidemiology can be designed through STROBE guidelines.⁷

It may be helpful to follow the IMRaD format for writing scientific manuscripts. This acronym stands for the sections contained within the article: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. Apart from this, article also includes Title, Abstract, Keywords, Acknowledgements, and References which again may be remembered by acronym TAKAR. So to prepare a paper for publication the components should be sequenced as Title, Author, Abstract and keywords, Introduction, Material and Method, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, References and Acknowledgements. The use of graphic/figure representation of data and important procedures or exercises can be considered. Tables should be able to stand alone and be completely understandable at a quick glance. Many formats for graphic presentation are acceptable, including graphs, charts, tables, and pictures or videos. Plagiarism should be strictly and deliberately avoided. It is important to cite any and all information sources used in the article.

Writing a scientific article may appear intimidating and frustrating. But the various parts of a scientific article are explained well and guidelines are given in different easily accessible sources. With time and patience, a young author can write a scientific article and get it published. And when one article is accepted and published it should be celebrated thoroughly to be remembered that the writing for standard medical journals makes a difference in some way.

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