

A GOOD MANUSCRIPT IS LIKE...

...a woman's dress:

- long enough to cover the topic
- short enough to still keep it interesting

Most investigators/clinical academics have limited time to keep up with literature – they will target:

1. **Title**
2. **Abstract**
3. Major headlines of the **Results / Figures**
4. First and last paragraphs of the **Discussion**

HOW TO WRITE WELL...

TOP 10 - What I tell my students/trainees:

1. **Title & Abstract** needs to be pertinent, conclusive, attract the right audience
2. Make a story
3. Draw the reader in
4. Keep the Introduction short – no more than 3 short paragraphs
5. Keep it simple – most elegant papers are those with least “techno-babbal”
6. Avoid “throat-clearing”

HOW TO WRITE WELL...

TOP 10 - What I tell my students/trainees:

7. Have up to 3 main points/conclusions – keep repeating them:

- **Abstract**
- end of the **Introduction**
- separate out into subsections in the **Results**
- beginning of the **Discussion**

8. Put headline conclusions in **Results** (each headline = 1 or 2 figures) – reading headlines only will tell the story you want reader to know

9. If you don't know where to start ...try **Methods!** You should know this! Then **Results** (Figures/Tables) in order - the rest writes itself!

10. After write final version – put it away, come back after days/week, re-work it.

...& PUBLISH

For all types of manuscripts*:

know your topic – is it significant enough?

know your target audience – what is the pitch?

know your data – is it good enough?

know your journals – is it appropriate?

know your limits – is it enough?

know the field / political climate – is it the right time?

*case presentations/series – basic research – clinical trials - meta-analysis – reviews

...& PUBLISH

Start well:

Read the Instructions to Authors and **FOLLOW THEM!!**

End well:

If Reviewers / Editors did not get the point...

yes, maybe they are idiots....

but, then again, maybe you did not write well enough!

Get over it!

Go back to the manuscript and clarify for submission elsewhere.

All manuscripts eventually find a home:

The rate-limiting step is your persistence!

Write well and get published

Developing a paper

- When is a study complete and ready to be written up?

Developing a paper

- Producing first draft:
 - Main figures
 - Outline of the results
 - Outline of the paper
 - Getting comments from colleagues
 - Decide on journal to define format and style

Developing a paper

- Writing the text:
 - One person gets to write it
 - Others comment on it
 - Junior people have to be given chance to write their own paper
 - Comments from others

Developing a paper

- Components of the submission:
 - Text (abstract, intro, results and methods, conclusion, refs, figures, suppl info)
 - **Each paragraph a small paper (for short papers/e.g. letters to Nature)**
 - Cover letter
 - Author info
 - Other key elements on the paper (e.g. OA, data deposition)

[Read other papers in journal to see structure](#)

Developing a paper

- Submit to the online system

Publishing a paper

- Reviews are back:
 - Rejected
 - Major revision
 - Minor revision

Publishing a paper

- Rejected: most times accept it, get the comments and revise and resubmit
- If strong feeling, appeal: only if you really feel you have a case (misunderstanding on either part, easy-to-do exps, additional data not mentioned in first version)

Publishing a paper

- Revise: Components:
 - Response to reviewers
 - Revised text and other components
 - New figures and data

Publishing a paper

- Response to reviewers/rebuttal:
 - Be short and concise
 - Be polite and show that you understood the point: no dismissive comments, reviewers read all comments and responses!
 - Make a strong case when you disagree but be respectful
 - If in extreme case feel reviewer is biased talk to editor, don't engage in a "fight" with the reviewer in the letter
 - Mention what changes you are making in the letter if possible to be short (but don't cite the whole text!)

You are not the only smart person in the field so if reviewer has an issue MOST likely you got it wrong or said it wrong

Publishing a paper

- Keep timing as short as possible but let editor know if delays expected

Publishing a paper

- Make sure you do a VERY good job submitting a revise version. If you are submitting a revised paper it means you are closer to publication: **errors are less likely to be caught after that!**

Publishing a paper

- Make sure you enjoy the moment with your colleagues! Junior people love to celebrate papers (or celebrate any time for that matter) with alcohol 😊