



# Manuscript Preparation Checklist

The primary goal of any publication is **COMMUNICATION** which can impact policy decisions, increase research funding, and contribute to scientific innovation.

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## Writing Preps

- Recognize that writing is a process and may require numerous drafts and edits.
- Review the literature to ensure originality.
- Conceptualize a study that is prospective, hypothesis driven, randomized if possible, double blind in design, and robust enough to address the research question.
- Choose an appropriate journal and an alternate option. Consider rank and impact factor.
- Check requirements for selected journal. Most provide specific instructions for authors.
- Select reporting guidelines appropriate for your study design (i.e. CONSORT, PRISMA, STARD).
- Prepare a framework for writing and establish an organized timeline.
- Factor in time for thinking as well as writing. Bringing together big ideas takes time!
- Craft a title that gives a strong first impression. Consider between 8 to 12 key words.

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## Writing Steps

- Follow the IMRaD (Introduction, Materials/Methods, Results, Discussion) method (see pg.2).
- Write your manuscript in the order that flows best for you. Methods and results sections may be an easier place to begin. The introduction may be more challenging and require more edits so may be the last section written.
- Be consistent in your style or content.
- Create an abstract that will help the reader decide whether the research is relevant. Word limit is generally <250 and no references are included. Accuracy is essential.
- Provide details in the methods section which will attest to the validity of the research. How and why was the study done? The goal is reproducibility and transparency!
- Present results sequentially through text, tables, and figures.
- Begin the discussion by summarizing the main findings. Then provide an explanation in the context of all relevant evidence. State limitations and discuss implications.

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## References

- Provide direct references to original research sources when possible. Preprints must be designated.
- Referencing AI-generated material is not acceptable.
- Verify references through an electronic bibliographic source, such as PubMed.
- Do not include retracted articles.

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## Resources

Bajwa SJ, Sawhney C. *Preparing manuscript: Scientific writing for publication*. Indian J Anaesth: 2016; 60:674-8.

Holmes, David R., Jr, Patricia K. Hodgson, Rick A. Nishimura, Robert D. Simari. *Manuscript Preparation and Publication*. Circulation: 2009; 120:906-913.

Jirge, PR. *Preparing and Publishing a Scientific Manuscript*. J Hum Reprod Sci 2017; 10:3-9.

Lendaris, Andrea and Charles Esenwa. *Tips and Advice on Preparing a Research Manuscript for Submission and Publication in a Peer-Reviewed Stroke Journal*. Stroke. 2023;54: e217–e219.

*Preparing a manuscript for submission to a Medical Journal*. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. (n.d.). <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/manuscript-preparation/preparing-for-submission.html>.

Wenzel, Volker, Martin W. Dünser, Karl H. Lindner. *A Step by Step Guide to Writing a Scientific Manuscript*. Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Internal Medicine. <https://intmed.vcu.edu/media/intmed-dev/documents/facdev/A6StepbyStepGuidetoWritingaScientificManuscriptbyWenzeletal.pdf>.

## Rapid Rejection Criteria from Journal Editors

- 1) The question being asked is not interesting;
- 2) The question being asked has been adequately answered already;
- 3) The question being asked has not been previously asked, but the answer is obvious from what is known in the field;
- 4) The hypothesis is wrong (usually reflecting inadequate preparation);
- 5) The methodology cannot possibly address the hypothesis;
- 6) The study is obviously underpowered;
- 7) The manuscript does not answer the hypothesis;
- 8) The manuscript contradicts itself;
- 9) The conclusion is not supported by the data.

## Worth the Space?

Is the information communicated in the manuscript worth the effort to read the paper?

## Editing Questions

- Is your manuscript a reasonable length? Most research studies can be described in 3,000 words.
- Are you consistent in your use of terms for identical items? Keep it simple.
- Did you use a spell and grammar checker? Sloppy errors imply sloppy research.
- Did you thoroughly edit your manuscript? Be your toughest critic.
- What feedback/criticisms have you received from co-authors and colleagues and those outside your discipline? Have you incorporated suggestions into your paper?
- Have you presented your results at a local or regional conference to get feedback?

## IMRaD Method

