

Preparing and Submitting the Manuscript

APAME
ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EDITORS

Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors
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JF Lapeña Jr. M.A., M.D., F.P.C.S.
lapenj@upm.edu.ph

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Preparing and Submitting the Manuscript

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At the end of this session, you will learn:

- The qualities of a good manuscript
- How to prepare a good manuscript
- The process of manuscript submission

OBJECTIVES

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SNOOPY'S
Guide to the Writing Life

With insights and advice from more than 30 of the world's most popular and respected storytellers including:
Ray Bradbury • William F. Buckley, Jr. • Julia Child
Clive Cussler • Fannie Flagg • Elizabeth George
Sue Grafton • Elmore Leonard • Ed McBain
Sidney Sheldon • Danielle Steel • Jack Canfield

Edited by Sarahly Conrad and Monte Schulz

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A good manuscript

- is potentially publishable
- is able to communicate a clear and useful message to the readers of a particular journal
- should also be exciting and have an impact on clinical practice.

Peh WCG, Ng KH. Effective medical writing (Pointers to getting your article published): Preparing the Manuscript for Submission. *Singapore Med J* 2009; 50(8): 759-762

INTRODUCTION

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Editor's viewpoint: publication enhances standing and reputation of journal.

Author's viewpoint: publication marks endpoint of scientific project.

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Producing a bad manuscript will only delay or prevent publication of good scientific material.

Points to consider in preparing a manuscript for submission to a scientific journal include:


- organizing material into appropriate scientific format
- writing clearly, concisely and simply.
- where and how to submit the manuscript.

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General principles for a good writing style:


- K.I.S.S.
- Write short and simple sentences.
- Use short words instead of long words.
- Avoid redundancy.
- Avoid figures of speech, idiom or jargon.
- Avoid passive sentences.
- Take care with abbreviations.
- Take care with modifying words and phrases

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Exercise


“To put it bluntly, the medical profession and its suzerain health system can no longer plan and operate as an amorphous farrago of services in splendid isolation from society’s imprimatur”
(AMA Gazette 1978)

Clearihan Lyn. Writing for Publication. Monash University, Melbourne. Available from: <http://www.phcris.org.au/conference/2005/workshops/clearihan.pdf>



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Exercise


- *Suzerain* = feudal lord; nation that controls another nation but allows domestic sovereignty
- *Amorphous* = shapeless, ill-organized
- *Farrago* = medley, hodge podge, conglomeration
- *Imprimatur* = official approval, license to publish

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Can Carotid-Sparing Radiotherapy Treatment Approaches Take The Conventional Techniques’ Place in Treating T1 Glottic Larynx Cancer among Filipinos?

Early-stage glottic squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is an extremely curable disease (>90% to 80%) with an excellent prognosis when treated properly with simple parallel-opposed small-field radiotherapy treatment protocols. Nevertheless, the experienced acute and late treatment toxicity is low, there has been very minimal interest devoted to the numerous vascular effects that can exist on blood vessels more than 10 years after this therapy.[1] Nowadays several of published studies suggests that utilizing neck radiotherapy (RT) for head and neck cancers likely increases the incidence of stroke and the other cerebrovascular events.[1-5] In the light of these numerous publications, some of the researchers consider that the radiation oncologists must release conventional RT techniques, which is known as OLB, for early stage glottic larynx cancer treatment, and which may be outmoded and obsolete. They recommend a new, novel treatment technique including oblique beam angles to decrease carotid artery doses. [6] This original research, the first of its kind in the country, presents the dosimetric results of carotid arteries doses obtained from different RT techniques and discusses and reviews the literature regarding this issue.

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Can Carotid-Sparing Radiotherapy Approaches Replace Conventional Techniques in T1 Glottic Laryngeal Cancer?

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dosimetric results obtained from parallel and oblique beam angle RT techniques.

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Finding your voice

- Grammar is not everything - but without it you risk obscurity
- Find the right word to convey your meaning
- Focus on correctness and consistency of language
- *Don't* be afraid of flair and individuality - but *do* read the guidelines to authors



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Tips for better writing

- Try to create visual images with words
- "structure is everything" (Easton)
- Organize your ideas to lead the reader through your argument
- In a sentence move from the 'known' to the 'unknown'
- Mix up sentence length
- Keep one idea per paragraph



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Writing Tips

- Use strong verbs rather than adding adverbs
Eg: instead of 'look into deeply' try 'delve' or 'probe'
- Avoid using intensifiers
Eg: for 'extremely thirsty' use 'parched'; 'awfully hot' could become 'scorched'
- Strong words are robbed of their impact by intensifying them
Eg: 'really exhausted'; 'truly exceptional'
- Look for redundancy of expression and delete
Eg: 'more equal'; 'most unique'



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Exercise

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • Avoid the possibility of | Avoid |
| • Another way this can be expressed is by saying that | In other words |
| • All results presented in this study | All our results |
| • Provides a detailed account of | Describes |
| • Due to the fact that | Because |



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More Tips

- Avoid cliches
"like the plague"
"the patient passed a specimen"
- Active versus passive voice
- Use similes, metaphors, analogies to add interest and aid clarity
Similes use 'like' or 'as'; metaphors state that item A is item B
"the patient with SOBOE had an ECHO which showed she had PPH, not an AMI"
- Avoid acronyms and abbreviations wherever possible



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"IT HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN"	I didn't look up the original reference.
"A DEFINITE TREND IS EVIDENT"	The data are practically meaningless.
"WHILE IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE DEFINITE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS"	An unsuccessful experiment, but I still hope to get it published.
"THREE OF THE SAMPLES WERE CHOSEN FOR DETAILED STUDY"	The other results didn't make any sense.
"TYPICAL RESULTS ARE SHOWN"	This is the prettiest graph.
"THESE RESULTS WILL BE IN A SUBSEQUENT REPORT"	I might get around to this sometime, if published/funded.
"A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF OBTAINED DATA"	Three pages of notes were obliterated when I knocked over a glass of beer.
"AFTER ADDITIONAL STUDY BY MY COLLEAGUES"	They didn't understand it, either.
"THANKS ARE DUE TO JOE BLOTZ FOR ASSISTANCE WITH THE EXPERIMENT AND TO CINDY ADAMS FOR VALUABLE DISCUSSIONS"	Mr. Blotz did the work and Ms. Adams explained to me what it meant.
"A HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT AREA FOR EXPLORATORY STUDY"	A totally useless topic selected by my committee.
"IN MY EXPERIENCE"	Once.
"IN CASE AFTER CASE"	Twice.
"IN A SERIES OF CASES"	Three times.
"IT IS BELIEVED THAT"	I think.
"IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT"	A couple of others think so, too.
"CORRECT WITHIN AN ORDER OF MAGNITUDE"	Wrong.
"ACCORDING TO STATISTICAL ANALYSIS"	Rumor has it.
"IT IS CLEAR THAT MUCH ADDITIONAL WORK WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS PHENOMENON OCCURS"	I don't understand.

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EXERCISE: Edit your work

This observer believes that, the most common criticism made presently by older practitioners are that young graduates have been taught a great deal of information about the mechanism of disease but little relative to the practice of medicine - or to put it in a more blunt fashion, they are too "scientific" and not know how to take appropriate care of patients'.



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EXERCISE: Edit your work

This observer believes that, (*wordiness, inappropriate punctuation*) the most common criticism made presently (*misuse*) by older practitioners (*misspelling*) are (*misuse*) that young graduates have been taught a great deal of information (*wordiness*) about the mechanism of disease but little relative to (*wordiness*) the practice of medicine - or to put it in a more blunt fashion (*wordiness*), they are too "scientific" and not (*misuse*) know how to take appropriate (*wordiness*) care of patients' (*inappropriate*)



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Stepping in the Scholarly Stream

Manuscript Format and Submission

- Submit to one journal at a time
- Follow the journal's instructions for authors
- Have a colleague review your manuscript
- Write an effective cover letter
- Review the manuscript checklist to make sure you have covered all the details



Publish, Not Perish: The Art and Craft of Publishing in Scholarly Journals. University of Colorado 2006. Available from <http://www.publishnotperish.org>

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Stepping in the Scholarly Stream

Manuscript Format and Submission

- Keep copies of text, original data, figures, references
- Package to avoid damage (if not electronic)
- Send by reliable means
- Expect acknowledgement



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Where to Submit
Targeting the right journal

- Every journal has a target readership - does it match your target readership (audience)?
- Match the message to the medium
- Make sure your article has the right format

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Stepping in the Scholarly Stream
Manuscript Format and Submission

What can authors do to ensure the publication process goes as smoothly as possible?

Work very hard, and send a polished article in that is very well-written. It also helps to meet editors at meetings, and do presentations of working papers and get feedback before submitting and become known in the field.

[Elizabeth Cooperman, peer reviewer and author](#)


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Take home points:

1. If you want to write well, read good writing
2. Revise and proof read your work
3. Read it out loud for sense
4. Remember: Clarity, Brevity, Simplicity
5. Get the basics right!.

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Take home points:

1. Structure your material into a scientific format.
2. Organize your material according to the appropriate article category.
3. Aim for clarity in transmitting your message to the audience.
4. Match your material to the audience (i.e. journal).
5. Follow exactly the journal's "Instructions to Authors".

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