

# Writing for ACTA Orthopaedica et Traumatologica Hellenica

Andreas F. Mavrogenis

*Editor-in-Chief, ACTA Orthopaedica et Traumatologica Hellenica*

This article offers advices and tips on medical writing for the junior authors and the less experienced in medical writing on how to prepare a quality submission. These tips apply to any author and any journal, and it is the Editor's personal view and experience in medical writing. Before starting the paper, search the related literature; choose quality papers that are electronically available; provide appropriate correct citations for any material previously published to avoid plagiarism. Before writing the paper, read the authors' instructions. These instructions will need to be met in any case.

## Authorship

The number and the order of the authors' names should be fair by reflecting their contribution and the order of their contribution to the manuscript. Those who authored should be listed as authors of the manuscript. Those who have contributed to the work, but not enough to merit their inclusion in the authorship, should be acknowledged in the acknowledgment section. Authorship is not a way to thank a colleague for support, access to resources, or mentorship. Scientific misconduct (fraud) in authorship includes a gift or complimentary authorship, ghost authorship, and coercion authorship.

## Title

It should be short and concise; it should capture the message. Titles raising or answering questions will far be more appealing than titles merely pointing to the topic. Do not use run-on (long and busy) titles.

## Abstract

It should include all the important information from each section that is the background, questions/purposes, materials/methods, results, and conclusions. The readers should be able to understand the total

paper by just reading the Abstract. Some read only the Abstract (e.g., because they do not have the time or access to the full text). Keywords are important for indexing and should be chosen carefully.

## Introduction (approximately 500 words)

It is the most critical section. It should start with focus on the topic. General and irrelevant information should be avoided. The first paragraph should present the background. The second paragraph should present what is important on the topic. Appropriate citations (the related studies) should be added. These studies should be further discussed at the discussion section.

The section should end with a clear rationale. Questions to be asked when formulating the rationale are the following: (1) What is missing from the literature for this study to merit publication? (2) How does this study add to the related literature? (3) Does it confirm or reject previous reports? After the rationale, the purposes of the study (study questions or hypotheses) should be listed. The purposes may be primary (the most important) and secondary (the least important). Writing should be clear and concise.

## Materials and Methods (approximately 1000-1500 words)

The section should start with the Materials in brevity and clarity. An example could read as follows: "We present ..... patients admitted and treated at the authors' institution with ..... from 2000 to 2024. There were ... men and ... women with a mean age of ... years (range, ..... years)". These two sentences provide almost all basic demographic information of the materials of the study. Follow-up is materials and should be provided here; the same for loss to follow-up including the reasons for the loss. Clinical reports must state

inclusion and exclusion criteria and whether the series is consecutive or selected; if selected, criteria for selection should be stated. These should inform the readers for any sources of bias.

When reporting clinical studies, the authors must state informed consent (where appropriate) and approval of the institutional review board or ethics committees of their institution. These should be added at the first paragraph of the Materials and Methods sections as follows: *"All patients gave written informed consent for their data to be included in this study. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB)-Ethics Committee of the authors' institution"*. Alternatively, *"Informed consent was not necessary for review articles"* or *"IRB and Ethics Committee approval was not necessary at the authors' institution for retrospective studies"*.

The Methods should contain adequate detail for another investigator to replicate the study. The authors should clearly present what they did and how they did it in the study and analysis. The Methods should be validated with appropriate citations such as for a used score, method, classification, etc.

If authors use statistical analysis, a paragraph should appear at the end of Materials and Methods stating all statistical tests used. When multiple tests are used, the authors should state which tests are used for which sets of data. The level of statistical significance is 0.05 in most cases.

### **Results (approximately 500 words)**

It should be the answers to the study questions in the same order as formulated in the rationale at the last paragraph of the Introduction section. It is easier and more informative to format the study answers (results) in paragraphs. Each paragraph should start with a key statement of the most important result, and then the description and statistical analysis should follow.

The authors should provide which group/method/analysis is more significant compared to another and parenthetically state the p-value immediately after the comparative terms. Provide the actual p-values instead of p-values greater or lesser than 0.05. Parenthetic reference to all figures and tables

enables easier interpretation of the data. Avoid too many numeral data in tables because it complicates and fatigues reading.

### **Discussion (approximately 1500-3000 words)**

The Discussion should start with a restatement of the problem or question in brief for emphasis, followed by the study findings and a synthesis of the comparison and the author's new data to arrive at conclusions.

The second paragraph should be the limitations. I prefer the readers should be informed early for the limitations of the study. Failure to explore the limitations suggests the authors either do not know or choose to ignore them, potentially misleading the reader.

In the next paragraphs the authors should discuss their findings in comparison to the literature. They should synthesize their data with that in the literature. The text should be formatted in paragraphs respective to the study questions/answers. Appropriate and quality studies should be used. Generally, many of these reports will include those cited at the Introduction section. A Table that summarizes the results of the most important published related studies would be useful here (refer to papers with similar tables for the format).

The ultimate paragraph of the section should be the conclusions. The conclusions should be based solely on data that come out of the paper. Conclusions irrelevant of the study findings should not be used. General and philosophical statements should be avoided. Statements such as "need for further research" or "need for future studies" should be avoided because they underpower the study.

### **References**

Choose quality references, and read the most important papers in full text; approximately 25% of the references used in the references list of a paper are actually read by the authors when writing the paper. References should be accurate and up-to-date. Electronically available citations should be preferred; abstracts and submitted articles (pend-

ing publication), newsletters, proceedings, and meetings syllabus should not be used because many in these categories ultimately do not pass peer review because it is not possible to be traced and cited. Use citations from the journal to submit your paper; this will gain the Editor that you are aware of the journal; it will increase the visibility of the paper and the impact of the journal.

## Figures and Tables

Figures and tables should complement not duplicate material in the text. They present information that would be difficult to describe in text form. Well-written papers contain one or two tables or figures for every study question/purpose posed in the Introduction. The legends should be explanatory and concise; what the figure/table show.

## References

1. Brand RA. Writing for clinical orthopaedics and related research. *Clin Orthop Relat Res.* 2008;466(1):239-47. doi: 10.1007/s11999-007-0038-x.
2. Mavrogenis AF, Auffret Babak I, Caton JH. Writing for SICOT-J. *SICOT J.* 2021;7:E1. doi: 10.1051/sicotj/2021042.
3. Mavrogenis AF, Scarlat MM. Writing for “International Orthopaedics”: authorship, fraud, and ethical concerns. *Int Orthop.* 2021 Oct;45(10):2461-2464. doi: 10.1007/s00264-021-05226-8.