

“It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggest a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material”

-Watson and Crick in Nature 1953

“The shortest way to do many things is to only do one thing at once” – Samuel Smiles (1812-1904)

- Issac Newton was a reluctant publisher
- Yury Struchkov one paper very 3.9 days for 10 years

“Seeing your name in print is such an amazing concept: you get so much attention without having to actually show up somewhere.... There are many obvious advantages to this . You don’t have to dress up, for instance , and you can't hear them boo you straight away”

-Anne Lamott 1994

Getting Started

- Uniform requirements (ICMJE) www.icmje.org
- Instructions for many journals via Central Medical College of Ohio website www.mco.edu/lib/instr/libinsta.html
- ICMJE recommends the use CONSORT guidelines for RCTS and STROBE for observational studies
- Lots of literature on “How to write papers”
 - *Scientific Writing - easy when you know how. BMJ Books,. Peat J et al*

Authorship

- Vancouver Guidelines
- Author Order
- Formal Policy
 - “The money, fame and happiness document”

Order of Writing

- Write
- Methods and Results first

Introduction

- Introduction (1-1.5 pages only)
 - Paragraph 1: What we know
 - Use best evidence/best studies/most relevant/most valid
 - Paragraph 2: What we don't know?
 - Paragraph 3: Why we did this study?
 - Aims and Hypothesis
 - DO NOT put results of study here
- Examples

- Avoid Textbook knowledge
 - *“Asthma is the most common disease of childhood”*
- *Avoid defining the problem*
 - *“Asthma is a condition in which the airway narrowing in response to community occurring..... “*
- Better *“House dust mite is thought to be important in*
- *exacerbating symptoms of asthma....”*
- Quote the science and not the scientist
 - *A study by Smith et al, reviewed the medical records of older people with....*
 - Better: *The incidence of XX was found to be ZZ in a review of hospital medical records*

Methods

- Where the study was conducted
- Every measurement reported in the results section must have a description of the methods used to obtain it
- Ethics approval and whether informed consent obtained
- Study design
- Participants
 - Inclusion/exclusion criteria

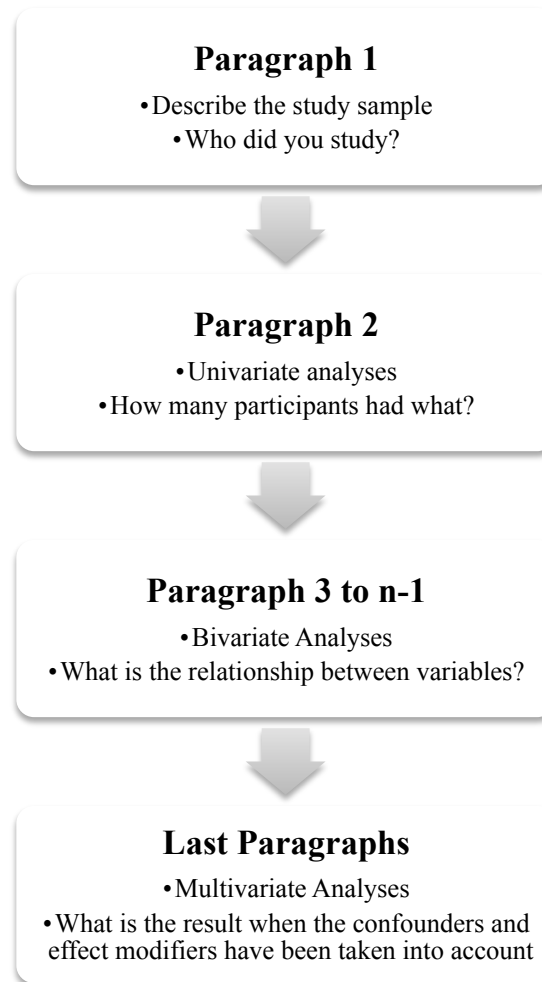
Methods II

- Sample Size
- Questionnaires
 - mode of administration
 - show that validated
- Interventions- CONSORT Guidelines
- Clinical Assessments – measurement bias

Statistical Methods

- what stats tests and stats program
- state p value used to determine stats significance
- info about distribution of variables and tests used
- reference if not simple or well known stats test

Template for Results



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Results

- Topic sentences to begin each paragraph
- Interpretation of Results (don't repeat numbers in text)
 - *The active group had a larger change from baseline than the control group, although the difference did not reach statistical significance*

Results 2

- baseline characteristics in table
 - *percentage, mean and standard deviation or median and interquartile range*
- there is a statistical significance between groups or there isn't

Rules for Reporting Numbers

- Numbers < 10 – report as words
- Words not numbers begin sentences
- no space number and its per cent sign eg: 35%
- % to only one decimal place is sample > 100 eg: 10.4%
 - If sample size < 100 do not use decimal place
- Ranges use “to” or comma not “-”

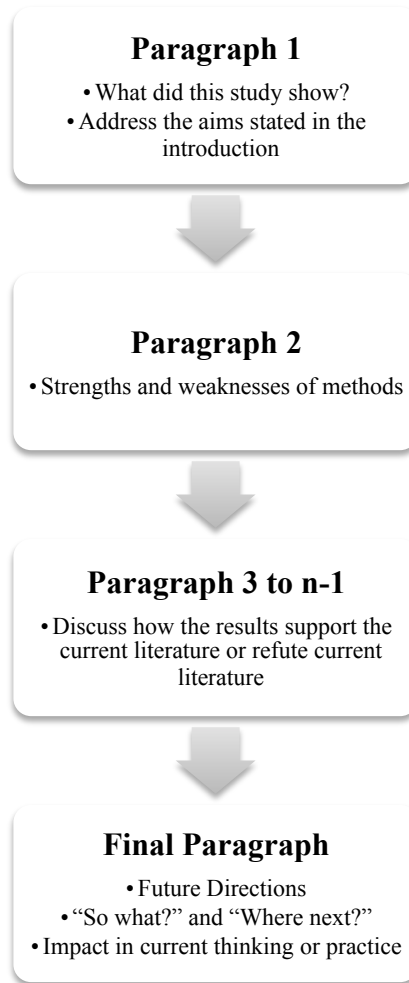
Tables and Figures

- avoid multiple borders and grids
- People read left to right – so groups in columns and outcomes variables in rows
- Show most important info in a figure but as long as figure does not take up more space than reporting the data would

Statistics

- Mean versus Median (interquartile range)
- SD versus SE
 - SE as a measure of distribution (wrong!)
 - SE error bar (avoid)
 - CI better for group comparison
- P values - 95% CI may tell the story
- Give P value rather than “NS”

Template for Discussion



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Writing Style

- Short words and short paragraphs
- Simple rather than complex
- Stick to nouns and verbs