



Best practice guidelines

WASP (Write a Scientific Paper): Miscellaneous practical and material aspects

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A B S T R A C T

To date, these WASP (Write a Scientific Paper) Best Practice Guidelines have dealt with various aspects of conducting research and writing it up. The papers in this set will review some practical and material aspects related to paper writing, particularly those pertaining to online resources that may potentially be utilized for research, how to structure a scientific paper using the conventional IMRAD (Introduction – Method – Results – and – Discussion) format, the use of bibliographic software for handling references, and the practicalities of dealing with a pathology lab for research purposes.

1. Introduction

The papers in this WASP (Write a Scientific Paper) set of Best Practice Guidelines will focus on some practical and material aspects pertaining to paper writing. These will include online resources [1], how to structure a scientific paper [2], bibliographic software for handling references [3], and the practicalities of dealing with a pathology lab for research purposes [4].

2. Online resources

In the last couple of decades, the computer era has led to a veritable paradigm shift, from the age-old use of hard copies of published research to virtual learning and the perusal of soft documents for research and for learning. A multitude of online resources have developed over the years and these greatly complement the medical professional's education, and access to knowledge, while facilitating continuous and updated medical education and development. The additional development of medical mobile applications has also facilitated medical training by providing versatility, flexibility and portability. A paper in this series discuss available extant resources [1].

3. Structuring a scientific paper

Publishing papers has become a crucial requisite for all scientists (researchers and academics alike) in order to further their professional career. The universal, well established paper structure format known as “IMRAD” (Introduction, Methods, Results And Discussion) facilitates the construction of papers and a paper in this series details this methodology [2].

4. Bibliographic management software

When writing a paper, the citation of extant research is paramount, not only to build a sound argument in the conducted research, but also to avoid accusations of plagiarism. For this reason, manuscripts need to be cited (in-text) and referenced (at the end of paper), in order for readers to ascertain the validity of the research claim/s. This must be done in proper and accepted fashion. Computer technology has permitted the development of bibliographic management software tools, a database wherein researchers search, store and cite references in virtually any required style, both in-text and in the references section. This software also obviates human manual inputting errors and inaccurate referencing. Such software also greatly facilitates citation and reference style changes when a paper is rejected and resubmitted to a different journal with a different citation and reference style after suitable amendments. A paper in this collection reviews this type of software [3].

5. Interfacing with the pathology laboratory

The pathology laboratory is a veritable hub of investigatory medical care. For this reason, the lab constitutes an invaluable asset for clinical research. Researchers may gain access to such services provided ethical and laboratory administrative permissions have been granted. While establishing the research budget, it is essential to have a clear understanding of what goes on behind the path lab curtains as this may impinge on what can and cannot be done in a research project, both financially and otherwise [4].

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6. Conclusions

It is hoped that the papers in this WASP BPG collection (as well as those already published and a few more to look forward to in future issues of *Early Human Development*) further enhance the understanding of the intricacies and minutiae that go into writing a paper.

Acknowledgments

The inspiration for this series of papers arises from the international Write a Scientific Paper course (WASP - <http://www.ithams.com/wasp>) [5,6].

Conflict of interest statement

There are no known conflicts of interest associated with this

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