Session Outline

• Good writing hygiene
• First steps
• Manuscript sections & strategic writing
• Submitting the manuscript
  • Revising and resubmitting manuscripts
  • Rejected manuscripts
• General tips
• Supplemental Resources
Why publish?

• Contribute to science
• You have something important to say
• Affect policy & change
• Expectations in your profession
Good writing Hygiene

• The more you write the easier it gets
• Protect your writing time
• Take steps to make yourself accountable
• Binge writing is rarely successful...write regularly
First Steps

• What are you writing about?
  – What data do you have access to?
  – What is important in your field?

• Manuscript ideas can be leveraged from other study’s (limitation sections, future directions/next step sections)

• Respond to journal call for papers
First Steps

• Have a target journal(s) in mind
  – Review thoroughly author instructions

• Obtain template articles from journal (subject matter template and statistical methods template*)

• Outline a draft of the paper
  – Work on the easiest sections first- more rewarding
    – Methods → Results

• Draft authorship list*
First steps- co-authorship

• Different groups have different “cultures” around authorship
  – 1st author- heavy lifting
  – 2nd author-analytical contributor (if not first author)
  – Last (senior)- typically the person whose grant funded data acquisition and/or the person who provided mentorship to the first author
  – Other authorship positions typically defined by the amount of effort invested
    – Initiate this conversation with your mentor/ coauthors

• Journals provide a general description of author contribution guidelines
## Co-authorship Table Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conception &amp; design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis &amp; interpretation of data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting the manuscript</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative, technical, or material support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*JAMA Authorship Form*
First Steps- The paper skeleton

1. Draft a “working title” for your manuscript

2. Using the comment’s feature of MS Word- enter key journal information in the margins
   - Type of articles (original research, brief report, meta-analysis, systematic review, case study etc.)
   - Abstract word limit (structured/ unstructured)
   - Font, margin parameters, word limit
   - Major section guidelines
   - Referencing style

3. Create a 2nd MS word document labeled “TBD content”
paper skeleton example
&
skeleton + outline example
Manuscript Sections & Strategic Writing
Major Sections

• Title page
• Abstract (structured vs. unstructured)
• Introduction/Literature Review
• Methods
• Results
• Discussion
• Tables & Figures
• References
Title page

- Concise
- Some titles report the findings
- Author affiliation – be consistent
- Corresponding author information
- Funding source*
Abstract

• Generally 150-250 words
• Structured vs. Unstructured
• Take home message

• Abstract Elements
  – Objective
  – Design
  – Setting*
  – Participants
  – Measurements
  – Results
  – Conclusion
Introduction/Literature Review

• The longer the literature review, the more theory included (generally)
• Public health and medical journals tend to have shorter introductions than social science journals
• Key questions that should be answered in this section
  – Why is the study important?
  – How does it add to existing knowledge?
• **Statement of purpose should be clearly stated**
• **Consider your literature review a marketing tool**
# Medical & Social Science Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Word count max</th>
<th># Tables/ Figures</th>
<th># of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical Journals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England J of Medicine</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J of the American Medical Association</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annals of Neurology</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Science Journals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging &amp; Mental Health</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity &amp; Health</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>≈30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J of Gerontology B: Psychological &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods

- Sample/Participants: when collected, response rate, etc.
- Measures: instruments, survey items
- Procedure: what did you do/study flow
- Statistical methods and software
- Generally it is okay if this section is written similarly across papers leveraging the same data set
- Great place to start writing in concert with the results section
Results

• Refer to describe sample and describe significant findings
  – “Table 1 shows participants in the two groups did not significantly differ in demographic makeup.”

• Focus on primary finding (related to study aims)

• Take note of journal style, some include p-values in text others do not

• Too many numbers can interfere with readability

• Do not discuss finding in this section
Discussion

• Summarize main findings, no statistics in this section
• Bridge key findings to prior relevant work
• Emphasize ways in which the current study enhances prior work
• Acknowledge limitations and emphasize strengths
• Do not end discussion section with limitations
• Don’t overreach/ overinterpret results- alternative explanations?
• Restate major point of paper, implications/ future directions
Tables & Figures

**Tables**
- Should be informative
- Should stand alone
- Prepare dummy tables (and figures) to circulate to coauthors for feedback
- Consult journal templates

**Figures**
- Illustrates an important aspect of the analyses in a way that is a good use of space
- Captions for figures should be clear and thorough
- Should stand alone
- Consult journal templates
• Journal templates should inform density of references
• Cite peer-reviewed journal articles
• Cite/reference strategically – pick the best/most important references
• Include references from the target journal (if possible)
• Break out references so they coincide with a specific point
  - “Underlying pathological mechanisms implicated in the relation between poor glucose regulation and cognitive impairment include cerebral microvascular and macrovascular damage [6], and increased AD neuropathology [7].”
  - “Underlying pathological mechanisms implicated in the relation between poor glucose regulation and cognitive impairment include cerebral microvascular and macrovascular damage and increased AD neuropathology [6,7].”
Manuscript Writing Resources

How to Write the Methods Section of a Research Paper
Richard H Kallet MSc RRT FAARC

How to Write an Effective Discussion
Dean R Hess PhD RRT FAARC

39 Sentences Toward Your First Draft of A Scientific Article

Complete these 39 sentence stems and you’ll have a good first draft of your scientific article.
(These were written with epidemiological research in mind. Some adaptation is needed for other types of research.)
Submitting the Manuscript
Manuscript Submission

• Prepare a short letter to the editor, “sell” your manuscript
• Have potential reviewers in mind
• Do not send articles to multiple journals at the same time
• Have co-author contact information readily available
• Organize submission files (separate files for abstract, manuscript body, tables, and figures)
December 17, 2014

James Fain, PhD, RN, BC-ADM, FAAN
Editor-in-Chief, The Diabetes Educator
Dean and Professor, Graduate School of Nursing
University of Massachusetts Medical School
55 Lake Avenue North, 51-580
Worcester, MA 01655

Dear Dr. Fain:

I am pleased to submit an original research report entitled, “Assessing the effectiveness of pharmacist-directed medication therapy management in improving diabetes outcomes in patients with poorly controlled diabetes,” for your review and consideration in the Diabetes Educator. This paper examines associations between pharmacist-directed medication therapy management, medication adherence, and type 2 diabetes-related health outcomes in a community clinic sample. We believe our findings advancing the existing literature on behavioral interventions for improving health outcomes in underserved communities.

I have full access to all the data in the study and take responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis. This work has not been concurrently submitted to any other periodical for publication. The manuscript has been read and approved by all authors, who have taken due care to ensure the integrity of the work. No authors claim any relationships that might present perceived or real conflicts of interest or financial associations in connection with this manuscript. Each author participated in writing the manuscript, and has seen and approved the submitted version.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need further information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Consuelo H. Wilkins, MD, MSCI
Executive Director, Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance
Associate Professor of Medicine

Hirofumi Tanaka, PhD
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Gerontology and Geriatric Research
Associate Professor
Kinesiology and Health Education
University of Texas
San Diego, CA, USA 92108

Dear Dr. Tanaka and Editorial Team,

I am pleased to submit a research article entitled, “Association between markers of glucose and insulin function and cognitive function in healthy African American elders” for your review and consideration for the Journal of Gerontology and Geriatric Research. This study examined how common markers of glucoregulation, including fasting plasma glucose, fasting insulin, and hemoglobin A1C relate to cognitive function in African American elders without diabetes. Results from this study provide preliminary support for potential glucose control in older African American elders, a group disproportionately affected by diabetes and cognitive impairment. This manuscript includes 1 table and 2 figures.

I am the corresponding author. I can be reached at jeannine.skinner@vanderbilt.edu. (p) 615-963-2834, (f) 615-320-9457. This work has not been concurrently submitted to any other periodical for publication. The manuscript has been read and approved by all authors, who have taken due care to ensure the integrity of the work. No authors claim any conflict of interests.

On behalf of the authors, thank you for your consideration.

Jeannine Skinner, PhD
Senior Research Associate
Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance
615-963-2834

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Phone 615-963-2820 · Fax 615-963-3208
www.meharry-vanderbilt.org
Please complete evaluation forms prior to leaving. Thanks!
# Session Schedule

All sessions held at the MVA from 12pm-1pm

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</tr>
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To RSVP call (615) 963-2820 or email mva@Meharry-Vanderbilt.org
Principles of Research Writing & Design
Educational Series

Writing a Scientific Manuscript (Part 2)

Jeannine Skinner, PhD
Senior Research Associate
Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance
10 July 2015
Session Outline

• Good writing hygiene
• First steps
• Manuscript sections & strategic writing
• Submitting the manuscript
• The review process
• Revising and resubmitting manuscripts
• Rejected manuscripts
• General tips & supplemental resources
Key Players in the Peer Review Process

• **Editor-in-Chief**
  – Responsible for entire content of journal

• **Associate Editors (Action Editor)**
  – Appointed by Editor-in-Chief, serve
  – Decide to reject or encourage revisions
  – Write decision letters
  – Recommend articles for publication to the editor-in-chief
  – Monitors the progress of reviews

• **Ad Hoc Reviewers**
  – Selected by Associate Editors
  – Review manuscripts

• **Managing Editor**
  – Works with editor-in-chief to coordinate the review process

• **Editorial Board Members**
  – Selected by editor-in-chief to provide expertise on a range of topics
  – Frequently serve as reviewers
  – May function as “editor”*

* Review structure of Annals of Behavioral Medicine
The Manuscript Cycle

- 1- Reviewed by the managing editor
- 2-Editor-in-chief (& Associate Editor)
- 3-Paper typically assigned to an (action) Associate Editor
- 4- Action editor enlist (at least 2) reviewers and evaluates the paper
- 5- Accepted manuscripts move to production phase

* Review structure of Annals of Behavioral Medicine
Resubmission Review

• Typically goes through the same initial first steps of a new submission before they are reassigned to the original Action Editor

• Action Editor
  – Can act “executively“

• Major revisions are “typically” sent back out to at least one (original) reviewer
  – Submission may go to a new reviewer
Peer Reviewing

- Generally unpaid/volunteer work
- “Culture of service”
- “Generally” selected based on expertise, availability, prior history
- Formal “peer reviewer training” is likely the exception and not the rule
Peer Reviewer Role

• 1- Serve as a consultant to the Action Editor
  – Strengths/weaknesses of the manuscript

• 2- Provide feedback to authors about ways to improve the science and communication of that science
Revising & Resubmitting
Revise & Resubmit - Initial Response

• Types of responses
  – Initial /Provisional acceptance
  – Minor revisions*
  – Major revisions*
  – Rejection

• There are no guarantees your paper will be published
Revise & Resubmit

• Read reviewers comments
• Sleep on it
• Read it again
• Re-read it again
• Consult coauthors on next steps
Revise & Resubmit

• Check journal and response letter for guidelines/instruction
• Note reviewers concerns, develop strategy to address concerns
• Don’t argue … respond to “actionable” critiques
• Resubmit your paper asap (keep momentum)
• Draft brief letter to the editor indicating the paper has been revised along the lines suggested by reviewers and is much improved
Revisions-letter format example
see MS word doc DIP_MTM response to reviewers

Revisions-table format example
DIP_MTM response to reviewers table format

Revised document example
see MS word document Skinner_revMTMDIP04.01.15
Rejected Manuscripts
Rejected Manuscripts

• Reviewers are very idiosyncratic
  – (next journal may give you totally different reviews)
• Everyone gets rejected….do not take it personally
• Maintain momentum, resubmit elsewhere
  – (Move on to your plan B, C, D journal)
Top 10 reasons manuscripts are rejected in medical education reports

1. Inappropriate use of statistics
2. Overinterpretation of results
3. Inappropriate or suboptimal instrumentation
4. Sample too small or biased
5. Text difficult to follow
6. Insufficient problem statement
7. Inaccurate or inconsistent data reported
8. Incomplete, inaccurate, or outdated review of the literature
9. Insufficient data presented
10. Defective tables or figures

Bordage G. Reasons reviewers reject and accept manuscripts: the strengths and weaknesses in medical action reports. Acad Med 2001
General Tips & Supplemental Resources
Writing Tips

• Write *when* you are at your best
• Write *where* you are most productive
• Avoid abbreviations unless they are necessary
• Be consistent in how you refer to specific concepts throughout your manuscript
• Exercise word economy
Word Economy

• Also known as “writing precision”

• Cutting words that add no meaning (wordiness)

• Wordiness not only increases length of your work but also makes your writing harder to understand

“The point is located at the corner of word economy and clarity” – AZ Writing Coach
Writing Tips

• Use short declarative sentences to improve clarity of writing
• Book chapters, policy papers, singled authored manuscripts **
• Have a peer draft your abstract (will help inform the clarity of your writing)
• Identify writing mentors (i.e. individuals who are productive)
  – Co-review manuscripts with mentors who serve as reviewers
• Leverage technology to streamline tasks and improve overall time management
Leveraging Technology - Evernote
DO MORE AND HAVE FUN WITH TIME MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE?

I love my time
Writing & Time Management Tips

• Develop a writing schedule
  – Schedule a “meeting” to write- when are you at your best?
  – Inform colleagues/peers of your writing time
  – Writing retreats

• Manage email expectations
  – (Example) Please excuse my delay I check my emails 2x day from 9am-11am and 3pm-4pm"
Writing Tips

• Red means
Supplemental Resources

Publishing in Peer Review Journals
(Taylor & Perron, Univ of Michigan)

Thoughts on publishing papers
Paul K. Crane, MD MPH
November 28, 2010 DRAFT

Publishing is a crucial aspect of academic life. Careful strategizing up front can lead to less frustration and perhaps even enjoyment.
Individual Membership

The NCFDD membership cuts across disciplines and our members represent a wide range of colleges and universities. We invite you to join us for 12-months of mentorship that includes our signature tools, training, and online community.

Read more >
Please complete evaluation forms prior to leaving - Thanks!
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