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Concept:

Providing a framework that allows for work on clinical research manuscripts in blocks of time

Steps towards writing your manuscript:

- Choose your journal and article format and download the instructions for authors including structure, word count, number of tables and figures, number of references. Paste the instructions on the top of the first page.
- Document manuscript version:
 - label document with date 14042021 time 1400 author sb, use the same label when you save the documentexample: Head injury in children 14042021 1400 sb
- Build the skeleton on the manuscript:
 1. page (will spill over into 2.):
 - Title
 - Authors
 - Affiliations
 - Corresponding authors with contact details
 - keywords
 - word count
 - other specifics as per journal instruction – some need bullet point statement of either impact or key messages
- abstract (note structured – headlines or unstructured, add max word count)
- introduction
- methods (or headline as per journal i.e. patients and methods etc.)
- results (or findings as per journal)
- discussion
- references
- Tables and figures
 - make the actual tables and figures a separate document that you label like the main document
 - example: Head injury in children tables and figures 14042021 1400 sb

Here is the game plan: Start with methods and tables

Note: you ignore the abstract and discussion completely, we will move to results afterwards, then introduction.

NEVER start with the intro, this is a killer approach.

It is easy to write the methods, you did the study and know the methods

Methods: please remember – this is method only, no results here

Total of 5 paragraphs

1. paragraph:

1. sentence: study design, patient population, study time frame

example: A single center cohort study (you can say prospective, never say retrospective, reviewer will now have you on the hook) of consecutive children with disease x diagnosed between time point 1 and 2 was performed.

2. and 3. sentence: define who is studied – inclusion/exclusion

example: patients were included if... specify. patients were excluded (from the included group only), if...

4. sentence: define any "added value" example: how was the data captured, was there a standardized care setting, charts reviewed by 2 reviewers, any other added value

5. Ethics approval plus number

done

2. -max 4. paragraph

independent variables are being described

example: headline Demographic and clinical features

Demographic characteristics included x, y and Z. Clinical characteristics included X, y and

5. Paragraph: Outcome

simply describe the primary and all secondary study outcomes, ideally provide a definition

example: the primary outcome was disease flare defined as increase in X.

6. Paragraph: Analysis

only describe the types of tests you have done. if the analysis is a hypothesis driven logistic regression or something else that needs more detail, describe the procedure here. last sentence: mention your data capture and your stats program.

done

Methods are written! Build the tables now, commonly journals want 3 tables

1. describes your cohort - aim: is my data generalizable

2. describes your comparison of interest

3. describes your key analysis

Note: You can and should build these table in parallel to the methods. They can be too detailed; you can always cut variables out. At this stage, list fields for all data. You will plug in the data at the next stage, when you write the results. At this time, it is only building the tables

Figures:

1. data; if you have a graph - show it 2. eye candy - something that is sexy, lovely to look at, if you have nothing consider a flow diagram Don't worry about the eye candy now, the data figure could replace a table if it is a better way of showing the information.

Results

I would suggest plugging the data into the table first, printing the table and then describing the findings in methods. if you choose to have most information in the tables, the result paragraphs can contain the highlights only - for example, report the comparison between groups. You can also decide to remove unimportant information from the tables and put it at the end of a result paragraph.

Example: the features x, y and z were not seen in either group.

Please refer to the table at the end of a segment (Table 2). It is annoying when the paragraph starts with "The clinical features are shown in Table 2....."

For the results you have the framework and order of the methods, repeat the headlines and plug in the data. No repetition of the methods here!!!!

1. paragraph

Describe your cohort

Example: The study included 34 children with disease x. these were x boys and z girls, the median age was...

2. -4. paragraph

Deliver the data to described in the corresponding methods paragraphs

Use the same headlines

5. paragraph

Report the outcome information

6. paragraph

If your study aimed to develop a model or any other advanced analysis, describe it here.

You are free to choose any appropriate headline

Example: risk factors for head injury in children

done

Next task: **introduction**

It has 4 paragraphs and should be 1.5 pages long in total. please don't waste exiting literature in the intro, you need it for the discussion.

1. paragraph

Disease of interest

Example: Head injury in children... this sentence needs to catch me, make a case for your illness - report the burden, be sexy, otherwise the reviewer is NOT interested. The next max 3 sentences support your statement, use max 3 references (all milestone or brand-new stuff)

2. paragraph

Problem of interest

Example: factors associated with head injury in children

Max 3 sentences with references (max 3)

3. gap of knowledge

Make a convincing case for what is NOT known

Who is at risk - what to watch for, why do we need to fill this gap (ie prevention strategies), max 3 sentences total - no references

4. paragraph:

Therefore the aims of the study were... list them in order, make sure you deliver.

commonly: **1. descriptive aim** to describe a cohort of children with disease x, **2.**

comparative aim to compare boys and girls with .. and **3. predictive aim** to identify risk factors for... (or whatever your key analysis is)

done

Discussion - now you are almost there...

The discussion has 5 paragraphs

1. summary and uniqueness of the study

This is the first study to identify..., then bring the highlights and use max 3 sentences that take information generated in your study

2. and 3. paragraph

Each make ONE point that is derived from your study, supports it and compares it to the published literature (max 5 references for each paragraph)

Here is the recipe:

1. state your point.
2. support your point.

3. and 4. sentences compare to literature with references at the end.
5. motherhood statement
repeat for your second point

These points are your key messages, your elevator conversation, the punch line of your research. You have to put them on paper, discuss with your team.

4. paragraph limitations

Start with: there are several limitations to the study. list 3 max.

Example: the sample size of the study was small. However...

Make the key points that the reviewer will muse against you. if you acknowledge the limitation, the reviewer has no ammunition.

5. paragraph

Conclusion, outlook, where should we go from here, what have we learned, 3 sentences max

done

Abstract

Check if your abstract is structured or semi-structured. If structured, try to transfer the key information of each segment you completed into the abstract, make sure the aims are corresponding. They don't have to be the same word-for-word, you have limited words for the abstract. Make sure the abstract truly reflects the text.

Nitty-gritty

- 1) Discuss the order of authors with the senior author, find a justification for the order and check the affiliations
- 2) Read the manuscript out loud and make sure it sounds sophisticated.
- 3) Send it to all co-authors with instructions when to return it.
- 4) The submission takes a few hours, you need a good letter and you HAVE to read the PDF before pressing submit.

You did it!