

Common Errors in Scientific Manuscripts

San Francisco Edit

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As editors of scientific manuscripts we have noticed the recurrence of certain errors related to the structure of the manuscript. We have listed below the most common errors to avoid in order to speed up the acceptance and publishing process. This, of course, is not a complete list because every journal has their specific guidelines. Besides being aware of these common errors, you, as an author, need to review the guidelines of the journal where you are planning to submit your manuscript.

The Title

1. It is too long or too short.
2. Does not match the article or study design.
3. Includes abbreviations, jargon, or attempts to be witty at the expense of clarity.
4. Inadequately describes the study.

The Abstract

1. Abstract results are not the same as the reported results.
2. Abstract methods are different than the methods in the manuscript.
3. Abstract conclusion is different than what is stated in the manuscript.
4. Exceeds the word limit allowed by the journal.
5. It is formatted incorrectly for the journal (eg. unstructured versus structured).

The Introduction

1. Does not describe the purpose and objective of the study.
2. Does not mention the importance and originality of the study.
3. Contains material unrelated to the study.
4. Contains material belonging in other sections of the manuscript.
5. It is not interesting.

The Methods

1. Some methods reported are not used.
2. Some methods are missing, thus not allowing the duplication of the study.
3. Reports statistical methods incorrectly or poorly.
4. Described methods do not relate to the results.

The Results

1. Reports data incompletely.
2. Contains results from another study.
3. Information repeats what is shown in the tables and figures.
4. Includes discussion or methods.

The Discussion

1. It is biased and omits findings from other studies.
2. Does not explain key results.
3. Does not describe the limitations of the study.
4. Does not characterize speculation as such.
5. Includes information unrelated to the study.
6. Includes outdated references or misrepresents them.
7. Overstates the importance of the study.
8. It is too expansive and lacks a logical flow.

The Conclusion

1. Just restates the content from other sections of the manuscript.
2. Includes statements not supported by the study.
3. Does not clearly relate the findings to the purpose of the study.
4. Contains unnecessary information.

For more detailed information regarding writing a manuscript for publication, please review some of our other articles at <http://www.sfcedit.net/newsletters.htm>. These articles approach such subjects as Writing the First Draft, Writing Effective Results, Methods and Materials, Discussions, Selecting a Journal, Responding to Reviewers, etc.