

Effective Manuscript Composition: A Structured Guide to Writing High-Impact Medical Research Papers

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An effective Abstract:

1. Purpose and Structure

- **Objective:** The Abstract serves as a concise summary of the entire paper, highlighting the main objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.
- **Structure:** It typically follows a structured format, mirroring the sequence of the paper: Background, Objectives, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.

2. Content Elements

- **Background:** Briefly describe the context or problem addressed by your research. This section sets the stage and explains why your study is essential.
- **Objectives:** Clearly state the primary goals or hypotheses of your study. What were you aiming to discover or prove?
- **Methods:** Summarize the essential methods used in your research. Include information about the study design, participants or data sources, and analytical techniques.
- **Results:** Highlight your main findings. Include specific data and statistical significance where appropriate but avoid overloading with details.
- **Conclusions:** Briefly describe your findings, emphasizing their implications and potential impact.

3. Strategies for Writing

- **Clarity and Brevity:** The Abstract must be concise and clear. Stick to the word limit (usually 250-300 words) while covering all key points.
- **Objectivity:** Present your findings objectively without overstating their significance.
- **No References:** Typically, Abstracts do not include citations.
- **Keywords:** Include relevant keywords at the end of the Abstract to enhance discoverability in electronic databases.

4. Questions to Address

- What problem or gap in knowledge does your research address?

- What were your research objectives or hypotheses?
- What methods did you use, and why are they appropriate for your study?
- What are your most significant findings?
- What do your results imply for the field or future research?

5. Final Tips

- **Write Last:** Although the Abstract comes first in your manuscript, write it last to ensure it accurately reflects the content.
- **Active Voice:** Use the active voice for a straightforward, engaging narrative.
- **Check Journal Requirements:** Different journals might have specific requirements for abstracts (like word count or subheadings), so tailor them accordingly.
- **Peer Review:** Have colleagues review your Abstract, as they may provide insights on clarity and impact.

6. Example for Context

- Start with a statement about the importance of disease prediction in clinical settings.
- Mention the objective, like improving prediction models using big data.
- Briefly describe the methods - types of data analyzed, and machine learning techniques used.
- Summarize the main findings, such as the increased accuracy of your models.
- Conclude with the potential implications for disease prediction and patient care.

An effective Abstract is a carefully balanced summary that condenses your research into a brief, readable format, enticing readers to delve into the entire manuscript. It should encapsulate the essence of your research and its significance in the broader context of medical science.

Keywords: Choose relevant keywords that will help index your paper and make it more discoverable in search engines.

A strong Introduction:

1. Purpose and Structure

- **Objective:** The Introduction should briefly present the purpose of your research. It's where you justify the importance of your study and how it contributes to the field.

- **Structure:** Typically, it follows a funnel-like structure, starting from a broad perspective and gradually narrowing down to your specific research question or hypothesis.

2. Content Elements

- **Background Information:** Provide a brief overview of your field's current state of knowledge. This includes the latest findings, significant theoretical and empirical gaps, and the relevance of your research topic.
- **Problem Statement:** Identify the problem your research addresses. This should be a specific issue or gap in current knowledge that your study aims to fill. Justify why this problem is worth solving: discuss its relevance, the lack of adequate solutions or understanding in current literature, and potential benefits.
- **Research Question or Hypothesis:** Present the primary question or hypothesis your study addresses. This should be a natural progression from the problem statement.
- **Significance:** Explain why your research is essential. Highlight its potential impact on clinical practices, policy-making, or further research.
- **The Novelty of Your Work:** Emphasize what makes your study unique. This could be a new method, a novel application of an existing method, new data, or a new way of interpreting existing data.

3. Strategies for Writing

- **Engage Your Audience:** Start with a hook—a compelling fact, a pressing question, or a striking statistic relevant to your field.
- **Be Concise and Focused:** Avoid unnecessary details. Stick to relevant information that builds towards your research question or hypothesis.
- **Use Clear, Accessible Language:** Remember, your audience is broad. Avoid jargon and explain complex concepts clearly.
- **Referencing:** Cite recent and relevant literature to support your statements. This demonstrates your familiarity with the field and grounds your study in existing research.
- **Balance:** Provide a balanced view of the current research landscape. Acknowledge both supporting and contradicting evidence.

4. Questions to Address

- What is known about the topic?
- What gaps or problems have previous studies identified?

- What is your research question, and why is it important?
- How does your research approach or data (like genomic, epidemiological, or EHR) offer a new perspective?

5. Final Tips

- **Revisions:** The Introduction often undergoes several revisions. Be open to restructuring it as your research evolves.
- **Peer Feedback:** Seek feedback from colleagues or mentors. They can provide invaluable insights on clarity and impact.
- **Alignment with Journal's Focus:** Tailor your Introduction to align with the specific focus and audience of the journal you are targeting.

6. Example for Context

- Start by highlighting the global burden of the disease your study focuses on.
- Transition to discussing how big data and machine learning have evolved in disease prediction.
- Identify specific gaps or limitations in current models or data usage.
- Introduce your approach and its potential impact.

Remember, the Introduction is your first opportunity to engage your readers and reviewers. It should communicate your research's relevance and potential impact in the broader context of medical science and healthcare.

A compelling Methods section:

1. Purpose and Structure

- **Objective:** The Methods section should detail how the study was conducted and how the data was analyzed. It must be clear and detailed enough for other researchers to replicate your analysis.
- **Structure:** Organize the section logically, typically following the chronological order of your research process.

2. Content Elements

- **Study Design:** Describe the type of research (e.g., observational study, experimental study, case study) and justify your choice.
- **Participants/Samples:** Detail how participants or samples were chosen, including inclusion and exclusion criteria. Mention the number of participants and any demographic information relevant to the study.

- **Data Sources:** Clearly state your data sources for studies using big data, like genomic or epidemiological data. Include details on data collection, such as periods and data retrieval methods.
- **Procedures:** Describe the procedures followed in the study, including any interventions or treatments applied.
- **Variables:** Define and justify the selection of your variables, including dependent and independent variables.
- **Analytical Methods:** Detail your analysis's statistical or machine learning methods. Include software or tools used, versions, and any custom algorithms developed.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Mention any ethical approvals obtained for the study and how participant consent was handled (if applicable).

3. Strategies for Writing

- **Clarity and Detail:** Be precise and thorough in your descriptions but avoid unnecessary complexity.
- **Replicability:** Include enough detail so that another researcher could replicate your study.
- **Justify Your Choices:** Explain why particular methods were chosen and how they contribute to addressing your research question.
- **Use Visual Aids:** Flowcharts, diagrams, or tables can be helpful to illustrate complex procedures or methodologies.

4. Questions to Address

- What was the research design, and why was it chosen?
- How were participants or data sources selected?
- What were the essential procedures and steps taken during the study?
- How was the data analyzed, and why were these analytical methods chosen?
- Were there any ethical considerations, and how were they addressed?

5. Final Tips

- **Consistency with Introduction:** Ensure that the methods align with the objectives in the Introduction.
- **Peer Review:** Get feedback from colleagues to ensure clarity and completeness.
- **Journal Guidelines:** Adhere strictly to the formatting and content guidelines of the journal you are targeting.

6. Example for Context

- Begin by outlining the overall design of your study on disease prediction.
- Detail the genomic, epidemiological, and EHR data sources, including data collection and processing steps.
- Explain the selection of machine learning models, including any novel approaches or modifications.
- Describe the statistical methods for model validation and result interpretation.

By following these guidelines, your Methods section will effectively communicate the rigor and reliability of your research process, enhancing the credibility of your findings.

An effective Results section:

1. Purpose and Structure

- **Objective:** The Results section should objectively present your findings without interpretation. It's where you report on the data collected and the outcomes of your analysis.
- **Structure:** Organize the section logically, aligning with the methods and research questions. Typically, it mirrors the order of your Methods section.

2. Content Elements

- **Data Presentation:** Present primary descriptive data such as sample characteristics or demographic information.
- **Main Findings:** Report the main results of your study, including outcomes of statistical analyses, machine learning model performance, and any other key findings.
- **Supporting Data:** Include secondary findings or additional analyses that support your main results.
- **Visuals and Tables:** Illustrate your results using graphs, tables, and charts. Ensure they are clear, well-labeled, and directly relevant to your findings.
- **Statistical Significance:** When presenting statistical results, include measures of significance (like p-values) and confidence intervals where appropriate.
- **Sequential Presentation:** Present the results in the same sequence as the methods are described to maintain continuity.

3. Strategies for Writing

- **Clarity and Precision:** Be precise in describing your results. Avoid vague language.

- **Objectivity:** Present the results as they are, without interpretation, bias, or speculation.
- **Conciseness:** Be concise but thorough in your description of the results.
- **Referencing Figures and Tables:** When discussing a result illustrated in a figure or table, reference it directly in the text.

4. Questions to Address

- What were the main findings of your study?
- Were there any unexpected or secondary findings?
- How do these findings relate to the methods used (e.g., how did the machine learning models perform)?
- Are there any trends, patterns, or points of interest in the data?

5. Final Tips

- **No Interpretation:** The Results section should not contain an interpretation or discussion of the results. That is reserved for the Discussion section.
- **Consistency:** Ensure consistency between what is reported in the text and what is shown in tables and figures.
- **Relevance:** Only present results directly related to your research questions and hypotheses.

6. Example for Context

- Begin with an overview of the dataset characteristics and demographics (if applicable).
- Present the main findings from your analyses, such as the predictive accuracy of your models.
- Use tables or figures to showcase critical data, like model performance metrics.
- Highlight any notable patterns or anomalies found in the data.

By adhering to these guidelines, your Results section will effectively communicate your findings, concisely, and organized, setting the stage for your manuscript's ensuing discussion and interpretation.

A compelling Discussion section:

1. Purpose and Structure

- **Objective:** The Discussion section interprets your results, explains their significance, and links them to broader knowledge in the field.

- **Structure:** It typically starts by summarizing the main findings, followed by a discussion of the results in the context of existing literature, implications for practice or research, limitations, and potential future research directions.

2. Content Elements

- **Summary of Key Findings:** Begin with a concise summary of your main findings.
- **Interpretation of Results:** Discuss what your findings mean, especially about your hypotheses or research questions.
- **Contextualization:** Compare and contrast your results with previous studies. Discuss how your findings align with or differ from existing research.
- **Implications:** Consider the implications of your results for clinical practice, policy, or further research in your field.
- **Limitations:** Acknowledge any limitations of your study and how they might affect your findings.
- **Future Research Directions:** Suggest areas for future investigation that emerge from your work.
- **Closing Remarks:** Conclude with a statement highlighting the overall importance of your work and its contribution to the field.

3. Strategies for Writing

- **Balanced Interpretation:** Be objective and avoid overstating your results. Provide a balanced view of your findings.
- **Support with Literature:** Support your interpretations and comparisons with relevant literature.
- **Clear Linkages:** Link your results to the broader context of the field.
- **Addressing Unexpected Results:** If your results were unexpected or contradictory to previous studies, discuss possible reasons and implications.
- **Readable and Engaging:** Make your discussion readable and engaging while maintaining scientific rigor.

4. Questions to Address

- How do your findings advance the current understanding of the topic?
- How do your results compare with other studies in the field?
- What are the clinical or research implications of your findings?
- What limitations should be considered when interpreting your results?

- What future research should be conducted based on your findings?

5. Final Tips

- **Integration with Other Sections:** Ensure your discussion is consistent with the Introduction and Results sections.
- **Conciseness:** Keep your discussion focused. Avoid straying into tangential areas.
- **Constructive Critique:** When discussing limitations, also consider how they could be addressed in future research.

6. Example for Context

- Start by summarizing the predictive accuracy of your machine learning models in disease prediction.
- Discuss how your findings relate to existing genomic and epidemiological data studies.
- Highlight the potential impact of your findings on developing clinical prediction tools.
- Acknowledge the limitations, such as data representativeness or model generalizability.
- Suggest future research directions, like applying your models to different populations or diseases.

By following these guidelines, your Discussion section will articulate the significance and implications of your findings and integrate them into the existing body of knowledge, showcasing the contribution of your research to the field.

Conclusions (can be combined with the Discussion Section as the last paragraph)

- **Purpose:** The Conclusions section briefly summarizes the essential findings and their implications.
- **Content:** Briefly restate the main findings, highlight the significance and potential impact on clinical practice or research, and suggest directions for future studies.
- **Avoid Overstatement:** Ensure your results support the conclusions and avoid exaggerating the significance of your work.

2. Acknowledgments

- **Recognize Contributions:** Acknowledge anyone who contributed to the research but does not meet the criteria for authorship, such as technical assistants.

- **Funding and Support:** if applicable, mention any financial support, grants, or sponsorships that supported your research.

3. References

- **Follow Journal Guidelines:** Adhere to the specific reference style required by the journal.
- **Relevance and Recency:** Ensure that references are relevant and include recent literature where appropriate.
- **Accuracy:** Double-checked all references for accuracy and completeness.

4. Tables and Figures

- **Clear and Self-Explanatory:** Tables and figures should be understandable independently from the text.
- **Proper Labeling:** Include clear titles, legends, and footnotes as required.
- **Consistent Formatting:** Follow journal guidelines for the format and resolution.

5. Supplementary Materials

- **Additional Data:** Consider including supplementary data, detailed methodologies, or additional analyses that are relevant but not essential to the main text.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that supplementary materials are accessible and referenced in the manuscript.

6. Appendices

- **Detailed Information:** Use appendices for extensive data tables, technical details, or complex mathematical derivations peripheral to the main discussion.

7. Conflict of Interest Statement

- **Disclosure:** Disclose any potential conflicts of interest that might affect the research or interpretation of data.

8. Author Contributions

- **Clarify Roles:** Detail the specific contributions of each author, adhering to the criteria for authorship as defined by the journal.

9. Ethical Approval Statement

- **If Applicable:** Include a statement about ethical approval for studies involving human or animal subjects.

Final Steps

- **Proofreading and Editing:** Thoroughly proofread your manuscript and consider professional editing services, especially if English is not your first language.
- **Compliance with Guidelines:** Double-check that your manuscript complies with all the submission guidelines of the targeted journal.