



THE GEORGE INSTITUTE
for International Health



Critical elements of publication

Robyn Norton

Principal Director and Professor of Public Health,

The George Institute for International Health, University of Sydney

Presentation overview

- > **Identifying your “message” and target journal**
- > **Key components of your publication**
- > **If at first you don’t succeed...**



Presentation overview

- > **Identifying your “message” and target journal**
- > **Key components of your publication**
- > **If at first you don’t succeed...**



Identifying your “message” and target journal

What is publishable?

- > Information that is of interest to journal editors... and readers, including the media
 - > Study results that are likely to lead to *significant* changes in policy or practice
 - > Controversial, quirky, unique and/or authoritative material



Identifying your “message” and target journal

What is publishable?

- > Findings from large-scale, globally relevant *intervention* studies
- > Findings from non-interventional studies that have more than local relevance
- > Findings that have relevance for local situations only are likely to be publishable in local journals only



Identifying your “message” and target journal

What is your “message”?

- > Do your findings have relevance beyond the local setting?
- > Would your findings likely have greatest impact on policy and practice if published locally?



Identifying your “message” and target journal

What is your “message”?

- > **Summarise your key message(s) in 3-5 dot points**
- > **Articulate what your findings add to previous work**



Identifying your “message” and target journal

Which journal to target?

- > Identify potential journals, based on...
 - > their stated interests
 - > familiarise yourself with the “author requirements” and journals’ stated interests
 - > the relevance of your findings to their interests
 - > your target audience
- > Be realistic, but aim “high”
 - > familiarise yourself with journal impact factors



Identifying your “message” and target journal

Which journal to target?

- > **General medical/health journals**
 - > e.g. Lancet, NEJM, BMJ, JAMA, AJPH, Bull WHO, Soc Sci Med
- > **Specialist injury and road traffic injury journals**
 - > e.g. Injury Prevention, AAP, Traffic Med
- > **Specialist disciplinary journals**
 - > e.g. health policy, epidemiology
- > **Local medical/health journals**



Presentation overview

- > Identifying your “message” and target journal
- > **Key components of your publication**
- > If at first you don’t succeed...



Key components of your publication

- > **Review “author requirements” of your targeted journal**
 - > **Overall structure/ layout/ headings**
 - > **Specific abstract requirements**
 - > **Word length**
 - > **Referencing requirements**
 - > **Figures/tables**



Key components of your publication

Introduction

- > **Provide context for your work – assuming reviewer/reader is not familiar with your topic**
- > **Provide up to date references, especially any that have been published in targeted journal**
- > **Outline gaps in knowledge that provide rationale for your study**
- > **Outline clearly your study aims**



Key components of your publication

Methods

- > **Provide sections on**
 - > **study participants**
 - > **method of selection and “representativeness” where relevant**
 - > **data collection methods and tools**
 - > **data management and analysis**
 - > **ethical considerations**



Key components of your publication

Results

- > **Characteristics of study population**
 - > **Response rates**
- > **Key findings in logical order supported by tables/figures**
 - > **Descriptive findings followed by more analytical findings**
 - > **Tables/figures provide the detail; narrative should “stand alone” but not repeat all that is provided in tables/figures**



Key components of your publication

Discussion/conclusion

- > **Opening paragraph should summarise key findings – qualitatively, not quantitatively**
- > **Strengths and limitations of the study should then be outlined**
- > **Consistency of findings with previous research should then be outlined – up to date references are essential**
- > **Implications of findings for policy and practice need to be clearly articulated – requires careful thought and creativity, not “more research is required”**
- > **Final summary paragraph of key findings and implications**



Key components of your publication

General points

- > **Attention to detail, attention to detail, attention to detail**
 - > **consider the reviewer**
 - > **spelling and sentence construction**
 - > **layout and headings**
 - > **correct referencing**
- > **Seek editorial assistance if English is your second language – is relevant**



Key components of your publication

General points

- > **Ensure that all requirements for submission are followed**
 - > **Numbers of copies of the paper**
 - > **Cover letter to editor – provide simple but strong message about the significance of the findings being reported**
- > **Understand the review process for your targeted journal – role of editor and editorial committee as well as reviewers**



Key components of your publication

General points

> Authorship

- > Too many authors is not a problem – getting key players off side by not including them can be!!
- > Ordering of authors requires careful consideration, consultation and agreement

> Acknowledgements

- > Importance of acknowledging funders, key stakeholders and contributors who do not warrant authorship, but might be offended if not “listed”
- > Remember that many journals require written permission for individuals who are acknowledged



Presentation overview

- > **Identifying your “message” and target journal**
- > **Key components of your publication**
- > **If at first you don't succeed...**



If at first you don't succeed...

- > **First, consider whether there is any scope for responding to reviewers comments... and then resubmit if comments can be accommodated**
- > **Second, try another journal, taking reviewers comments into consideration**
- > **Keep trying**



Presentation summary

- > **Carefully identify your “message(s)” and select most relevant target journal - be mindful of the editor’s needs**
- > **Follow author “requirements” strictly**
- > **Attention to detail is crucial - be mindful of your reviewers**
- > **If at first you don’t succeed, keep trying**





THE GEORGE INSTITUTE
for International Health



www.thegeorgeinstitute.org