

Writing for Publication

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Editor: European Journal of Cancer Care,
Member: International Academy of Nursing Editors,
Member: Committee on Publication Ethics.

Why bother with writing?

- Reporting your findings is an essential part of the research process (Robson, 2002)
- Research should always result in praxis (Silverman, 2004)
- Three imperatives for publishing
- *Building the knowledge base* - the academic imperative
- *Publish or perish* - the personal / professional imperative
- *Giving voice to your informants* - the ethical imperative

Who are you writing for?

- Start from first basics
- Consider your reason for writing and your target audience (Rosenfeld et al, 2000).
- Write clearly, succinctly and accurately with your intended audience in mind (Fahy, 2008a).
- Make sure you cover all relevant literature in your introduction (Fahy, 2008a, 2008b; Audisio et al, 2008).
- Build a strong, reasoned and well supported argument i.e. start with a central thesis and stick to it (Fahy, 2008b).

3

What's in a name?

- For quantitative studies:
- It is useful for the title to be in this format 'Topic or intervention/question: design/type of paper' and identifies the population/care setting studied e.g.

The effectiveness of telephone support for adolescents with insulin dependant diabetes: results from a randomised controlled trial.

Managing organisational change in complex healthcare organisations: suggestions from a multiple embedded case-study of three hospitals in the southern Netherlands.

4

What's in a name?

- For qualitative studies:
- Greater variation is normal, but in general, it is better to clearly state the main topic or themes originating from the study, the study question, design and population/setting e.g.

Faith, Hope and Charity: the origins of the British hospice movement prior to the work of Dame Cicely Saunders. A narrative literature review.

Living with uncertainty: the lived experience of women newly diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. Findings from an hermeneutic phenomenological interview study.

5

What's in a name?

- For qualitative studies:
- Try to avoid abstract titles, especially those containing lengthy quotations from the data e.g.

'It was when he shut the door and left me alone that the enormity of what had just taken place hit me': An exploratory study of physician's interview skills when breaking bad news to prostate cancer patients.

- Or those containing obscure or obtuse statements e.g.

Desperation, exasperation and resignation: The ineffable poignancy of false hope and bargaining at the end of life.

6

- What is the study about?
 - Prisoners on death row?



7

- What is the study about?
 - Prisoners on death row?
 - Hospice patients?



8

- What is the study about?
 - Prisoners on death row?
 - Hospice patients?
 - Or the attempts of older men to find youth again through a younger partner?

The title actually tells us very little about the study!



9

What's in a name?

- Give careful consideration to the title and try to include:
 - Reference to the population, sample (or theoretical framework for more qualitative work)
 - Reference to the research method(s) used
 - Reference to the intervention where appropriate
 - Reference to a key finding or findings
 - Reference to multidisciplinary, multi-centre or international nature of the study if appropriate.
- Draw out any methodological or analytical innovations in the work and make sure these are included (Aksnes and Rip, 2009).

10

The art of the abstract

- Clear, transparent and sufficiently detailed abstracts are vital as readers and reviewers often base their assessment of a paper on the abstract.
- Pre-reviewed screening procedures often include study of the abstract only
- The abstract should contain sufficient information to serve as an accurate record of its conduct and findings, and provide optimal information about the study within the constraints of the journal house-style.
- A properly constructed abstract helps individuals to quickly assess the importance of a paper and aids the retrieval of relevant papers from electronic databases.

11

The art of the abstract

- The abstract should accurately reflect what is in the paper and should not include information not contained in the article.
- Studies comparing the accuracy of abstracts and manuscript content often find claims which are inconsistent with, or missing from the full article.
- Conversely, omitting important information could mislead someone's interpretation of trial findings.

12

Selecting your keywords

- Between four and six key words are normally required.
- These should accurately identify the paper's subject, purpose, method and focus.
- Use of the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH®) thesaurus or Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL) headings (or other indices) are useful e.g.
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/meshhome.html>
- If your keywords are not in this list, they run the chance of being missed by others undertaking literature searches and will not be identified, read (or cited!)

13

Selecting your keywords

- Make sure that you include reference to the same factors in the abstract using the same words to aid 'crawling' by search engine 'spiders' or 'robots'.
 - Look at citation indexes to consider which words might be most appropriate e.g. cancer or oncology? Paediatric or children? Male or men's etc. (target audience)
 - Make these your keywords where possible, and reiterate these in your abstract, introductory paragraph and your conclusion.
 - Consider the appropriateness and cultural relevance of certain spellings e.g. US or UK English?

14

Selecting your keywords

- Don't be tempted to squeeze these words in too often though as search engine algorithms have failsafe measures to detect deliberate attempts to cheat search engine optimisation programmes.
- Once you have established the accessibility of the manuscript to search engine algorithms, use other words featuring highly on the citation list.
- Make sure you refer (accurately) to all key authors in the field and expand upon/explain their ideas – good summations of prior work tend to be cited more frequently than original texts over time, so long as they add fresh insight.

15

Structuring your paper

- The best papers include a structured abstract which is appropriate to the design of the study and journal house-style (see *guidelines for authors*).
- Quantitative studies, especially controlled trials usually follow the CONSORT format (IMRaD) i.e.
 - Introduction (including background and objectives)
 - Methods
 - Results
 - Discussion

16

Structuring your paper

- Introduction: clear statement of research question, purpose, rationale.
- Methods: clear description of the trial design (such as parallel, cluster, non-inferiority, phenomenological, exploratory, case-study etc.)
- Objective: specific objective or hypothesis
- Participants
- Eligibility criteria for participants and the settings where the data were collected
- Interventions
- Outcome: clearly defined primary outcome for this report
- Randomisation: how participants were allocated to interventions
- Blinding: whether participants and those assessing the outcomes were blinded to group assignment or results.

17

Structuring your paper

- Numbers randomised to each group
- Recruitment
- Numbers analysed and statistical methods used
- Number of participants analysed in each group
- Outcomes: for the primary outcome, a result for each group and the estimated effect size and its precision
- Harms: important adverse events or side effects
- Conclusions: general interpretation of the results
- Trial registration number and name of trial register
- Funding: source of funding

18

Structuring your paper

- Randomised (and quasi-randomised) controlled trial
- CONSORT – Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials
- <http://www.equator-network.org/index.aspx?o=1032>

19

What about qualitative papers?

- Communicating the context – may be an important first consideration in a case-study report on a particular hospital or health care system – a university even.
 - e.g. explanation of the background, history, philosophy, personalities, cultures and political scenario on the study location may provide a good rationale / explanation for the case study or analysis (Silverman, 2004)
 - This may be followed with a detailed account of any theoretical frameworks which have been used to inform the study (i.e. establishing an audit trail)
 - Data may then be discussed in relation to various aspects of the framework – or the data categories themselves.

20

What about qualitative papers?

- COREQ Guidelines (Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research)
- Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., Craig, J. (2007) Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care* 19:349-357.
- Available from:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>

21

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Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups

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Abstract

Background. Qualitative research explores complex phenomena encountered by clinicians, health care providers, policy makers and consumers. Although partial checklists are available, no consolidated reporting framework exists for any type of qualitative design.

Objective. To develop a checklist for explicit and comprehensive reporting of qualitative studies (indepth interviews and focus groups).

Methods. We performed a comprehensive search in Cochrane and Campbell Protocols, Medline, CINAHL, systematic reviews of qualitative studies, author or reviewer guidelines of major medical journals and reference lists of relevant publications for existing checklists used to assess qualitative studies. Seventy-six items from 22 checklists were compiled into a comprehensive list. All items were grouped into three domains: (i) research team and reflexivity, (ii) study design and (iii) data analysis and reporting. Duplicate items and those that were ambiguous, too broadly defined and impractical to assess were removed.

Results. Items most frequently included in the checklists related to sampling method, setting for data collection, method of data collection, respondent validation of findings, method of recording data, description of the derivation of themes and inclusion of supporting quotations. We grouped all items into three domains: (i) research team and reflexivity, (ii) study design and (iii) data analysis and reporting.

Conclusions. The criteria included in COREQ, a 32-item checklist, can help researchers to report important aspects of the research team, study methods, context of the study, findings, analysis and interpretations.

Keywords: focus groups, interviews, qualitative research, research design

22

COREQ Criteria

32 questions
covering 3
domains:

- research team and reflexivity
- study design
- analysis and findings

Table 1 Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ): 32-item checklist

No	Item	Guide questions/description
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity		
Personal Characteristics		
1.	Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?
2.	Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? <i>E.g. PhD, MD</i>
3.	Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?
4.	Gender	Was the researcher male or female?
5.	Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?
Relationship with participants		
6.	Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?
7.	Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? <i>e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research</i>
8.	Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? <i>e.g. Bias, assumptions, motives and interests in the research topic</i>
Domain 2: study design		
Theoretical framework		
9.	Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? <i>e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis</i>
Participant selection		
10.	Sampling	How were participants selected? <i>e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball</i>
11.	Method of approach	How were participants approached? <i>e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email</i>
12.	Sample size	How many participants were in the study?
13.	Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?
Setting		
14.	Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? <i>e.g. home, clinic, workplace</i>
15.	Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?
16.	Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? <i>e.g. demographic data, data</i>
Data collection		
17.	Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?
18.	Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?
19.	Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?
20.	Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?
21.	Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?
22.	Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?
23.	Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?
Domain 3: analysis and findings		
Data analysis		
24.	Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?
25.	Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?
26.	Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?
27.	Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?
28.	Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?
Reporting		
29.	Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes / findings? Was each quotation identified? <i>e.g. participant number</i>
30.	Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?
31.	Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?
32.	Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?

Downloaded from <http://mqr.oxfordjournals.org/> at Universitat Maastricht on January 12, 2011

How should a qualitative report be written?

- Advice for the authors of quantitative research reports is plentiful – but some good elementary papers include Audisio et al (2008), Rosenfeldt et al (2000) and Mullinger et al (2007), as well as most good research textbooks e.g. Silverman (2004).

Guidelines for qualitative report writing (after Miles and Huberman, 1994)

- the report should tell us what the study was about – or came to be about
- it should communicate a clear sense of the social and historical context in which data were collected
- it should provide a 'natural history of the inquiry' (i.e. a clear audit trail) so that we can see what was done, by whom, to whom, how, and why
- we should see why key concepts emerged from the coding and how these relate to existing theory
- well chosen data should be used to warrant the arguments and conclusions being posited
- broad conclusions should be articulated and their importance to other settings or worlds of experience discussed

25

Additional advice from Silverman (2004)

- Data presentation and discussion
 - introduce the main themes or categories derived from the data and discuss these one by one or, if using a theoretical framework, in relation to this
 - the section should proffer a convincing account of the phenomena you have found in the data. This section may be quite descriptive, or might be more analytical.
 - summarise the section by saying what has been achieved, what the data suggest and any surprising results encountered with possible explanations.

26

Additional advice from Silverman (2004)

- Conclusions and hypotheses: need to demonstrate the work's broader utility (i.e. transferability)
 - what did you learn from the conduct of the study
 - how far have your questions been answered
 - were the results anticipated – are there any surprises?
 - how far are your findings supported by other literature or explained by means of your theoretical framework?
 - how does what you have found contribute to the body of knowledge in this area?
 - to what extent might it be transferable?
 - can you apply findings to current practice / policy?
 - what research should follow on from the study

27

Other types of study

- Observational cohort, case control and cross sectional studies
- STROBE guidelines i.e.
- Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology
- <http://www.equator-network.org/index.aspx?o=1032>

28

Other types of study

- Quasi experimental / non-randomized evaluations
- TREND - Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Non-randomized Designs
- <http://www.equator-network.org/index.aspx?o=1032>

29

Other types of study

- Systematic Review of Controlled Trials
- PRISMA - Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
- <http://www.equator-network.org/index.aspx?o=1032>

30

Other types of study

- Systematic Review of Observational Studies
- MOOSE Meta-analysis of Observational Studies in Epidemiology
- <http://www.equator-network.org/index.aspx?o=1032>

31

Review papers

- Background: statement of the problem/phenomena of interest a brief summary of existing research, explanation of the purpose of the review in relation to this.
- Methods: explicit statement of the scope of the review and its aims and objectives.
- Search strategy: description of search strategy, including time period and limits applied, keywords and index terms, citation searching, databases and registries searched. Search software used, including special features used, use of hand searching.
- Description of search results: justification for exclusions, method of addressing articles published in languages other than English, handling abstracts and unpublished studies, contact with authors and efforts made to include all available papers.

32

Review papers

- Selection criteria: types of study designs/papers considered, assessment of quality,
- Selection process: how data were classified and coded (eg, multiple raters, blinding, and inter-rater reliability)
- Synthesis: approach taken to synthesise evidence
- Results: flow chart of studies from search to inclusion (number identified from search, selected for scrutiny, included in review, included in meta-analysis or synthesis)
- Descriptive information: for each study (setting, participant characteristics, sample size, methods, interventions/procedures, follow-up period)

33

Review papers

- Summary of individual results: including point estimates, confidence intervals and p values where relevant/available) and if relevant, an overall estimate and results of sensitivity testing.
- Discussion: brief recapitulation/summary of the results taking into account study hypotheses/aims
- Interpretation of results: taking into account study limitations
- Overall Assessment: of the current state of knowledge in the context of study results and other evidence.
- Implications: consideration of the implications of the current state of knowledge for further research and or practice.

34

Ways to succeed when writing your report

- Establish a writing schedule and set a completion date
- Write down what you want your paper to achieve
- Consider how your paper can create interest
- Make sure you use the acceptable format
- Make sure your paper is current
- Make the paper easily navigable
- Stay focused – don't drift!
- Make your point clear
- Conclude logically
- Proof read!

35

Improving your citation chances

Make your work original, thought provoking and controversial

- Don't adopt too servile an approach to existing theory or literature – originality is more likely to get you cited than conformity with established norms.
- Critique, debate and deconstruct where possible – including where appropriate, your own work and ideas.
- Resist the temptation to use others' illustrations or diagrams.
- Improve, expand and innovate upon any existing illustrations or diagrams, others are then more likely to request their use with the ensuing citation.

36

Improving your citation chances

Make sure your references are accurate and correct

- Especially when referring to your own, previously published work!
- If you are producing more than one publication, wait where possible until the first is in print rather than cite it as 'in press' or 'accepted for publication' these do not constitute searchable citations.
- Beware of the temptation to engage in redundant publications or 'salami slice' – editors and publishers are becoming more aware of these practices and rejected papers cannot be cited.
- There is a negative correlation between self-citation rates and acceptance for publication in higher impact factor journals.

37

Improving your citation chances

Make sure your references are accurate and correct

- Resist the temptation to engage in multiple guest authorship or too lengthy authorship lists as others are likely either to abbreviate the reference in their own work or make an error in the citation preventing easy recognition of your manuscript by search engine 'spiders' and 'robots' – or citation databases.
- Many such algorithms (e.g. SCOPUS) cannot cope with overlong strings of names – latter authors' names are likely to be omitted in the identification of citations when calculating more complex citation rankings such as the Hirsch index (h-index) (Choi et al, 2009).

38

Improving your citation chances

- A quantitative content analysis of the top ten highest ranking nursing journals by Mantzoukas (2009) demonstrated that only 7% of the published studies were experimental, 6% quasi-experimental and only 2% based on meta-analysis, the rest being non-experimental (39%), phenomenological (7%), grounded theory (4%), or other types of paper.
- Reviews of the literature and secondary analysis only accounted for 5% and 3% respectively – yet reviews and meta-analyses are amongst the most cited publications in the journals of many disciplines (Aksnes and Rip, 2009; Hallberg, 2009) thus...
- If you want to be cited, write a review or meta-analysis paper in preference (or addition to) your study report!

39

Improving your citation chances

Open access increases the research impact of your work

- Publication in open access journals increases research impact by allowing greater access to, and citation of your work (Bowering Mullen, 2008).
- Publish in peer reviewed online journals but check their credibility e.g. review policy, editorial board membership, inclusion in subject citation indexes etc.
- Look into the possibility of self-archiving your work on institutional or society websites and repositories, or even your own website or blog as long as it is well designed and has plenty of back-links (Bowering Mullen, 2008).

40

Improving your citation chances

- Information on maximising the search appeal of your own website can be found in the Google Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide (Version 1.1, 13th November, 2008).
- You could also consider depositing your work in a disciplinary repository such as arXiv (physics) or Cog-Prints (cognitive science and psychology) (Bowering Mullen, 2008).
- These repositories are designed to be 'crawled' by the search algorithms used by Google, Google Scholar etc. raising the accessibility of your work to others working in the same field.

41

Improving your citation chances

If submitting to a traditional journal

- Make sure they participate in the Google Scholar search scheme and that the journal is included in all relevant citation indexes.
- Check to see if a known publication in the journal can be found in a Google Scholar search. If not, it is unlikely to be collaborating with them to make material more accessible and your work will have less web coverage (Bowering Mullen, 2008).
- If possible, publish in journals that also publish their content online and do not discount 'pay to publish' schemes such as Wiley's 'Online Early' scheme as this provides quicker and extended free access to your work by others (Bowering Mullen, 2008).

42

Improving your citation chances

- Do not be afraid to insist upon your right to retain copyright over your work so that you can 'self-archive' the work elsewhere.
- This means that you can place digital copy where interested parties can get free access to it without purchasing a branded PDF from the publisher.
- You will need to make sure if submitting to 'traditional' publishers that the copyright agreement allows you to place pre-prints (pre-refereed copy) or post-prints (post-refereed copy) elsewhere.
- You can also check publishers' policies on self-archiving by inserting the journal name in the SHERPA/RoMEO website:
 - <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php>

43

SHERPA **RoMEO**

European Journal of Cancer Care:

Journal: European Journal of Cancer Care (ISSN: 0961-5423)

Publisher: Blackwell Publishing Ltd

These summaries are for the publishers *default* policies and changes or exceptions can often be negotiated by authors.

Publisher: Blackwell Publishing

Pre-print: author can archive pre-print (ie pre-refereeing)

Post-print: subject to Restrictions below,

Restrictions: author can archive post-print (i.e. final draft post-refereeing)

Some journals impose embargoes typically of 6 or 12 months, occasionally of 24 months

No listing of affected journals available as yet

Conditions:

Publisher version cannot be used

On author or institutional or subject-based server

Server must be non-commercial

Publisher copyright and source must be acknowledged with set statement ("The definitive version is available at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com>")

Articles in some journals can be made Open Access on payment of additional charge See Wiley-Blackwell entry for articles after February 2007.

44

Improving your citation chances

Engage in your own marketing programme

- Send information about your pending publication to group lists, specialist websites and summaries to non-peer reviewed collegiate journals.
- Submit an abstract (or abstracts) based on the paper to specialist conferences (these will draw the attention of interested parties to the publication and are often published online after the conference).
- Send free author copies of the final paper to research collaborators or subject specialists, especially if they are opinion leaders.
- Consider publishing supplementary data or analysis online and make sure that you draw attention in the posting to your paper.
- Sharing additional data with others increases impact by up to 70% (Piwowar et al, 2007; Bowering-Mullen, 2009).

45

Improving your citation chances

What about impact factor?

- Check the citation impact of the journal in Google Scholar, Web of Science or SCOPUS (Bowering Mullen, 2008), but be aware that a high impact factor may involve other trade-offs such as time to publication or high rejection rates.
- Remember that 'citation rates' do not necessarily equate with changes in clinical practice, uptake of findings or even (arguably) advances in scientific knowledge (Ketefian and Comerford-Freda, 2009; Aksnes and Rip, 2009; Opthof et al, 2002)
- What is your real motivation in seeking such a publication?
- Citation measures are fallible and are no guarantee that the original research has been read or cited correctly, let alone had any real impact on clinical practice or opinion (Stordal, 2009)

46

Improving your citation chances

- Leimu and Koricheva (2005) found the widespread belief that publication in a high impact journal guaranteed a good citation rate by increasing its visibility or persuasiveness to be completely unfounded given that their results:
 - *'do not support this 'journal effect' hypothesis, since there was considerable variation in citation rates, especially for papers published in high impact journals'*
 - (Leimu and Koricheva (2005 p29).
- Impact factors are increasingly being used in ways for which they were never intended and this too has an impact on the publication and citation success of manuscripts (Ketefian and Comerford-Freda, 2009).

47

Improving your citation chances

Manuscript corrections

- It goes without saying then that manuscripts which take account of reviewer recommendations are more likely a) to get published and b) to be cited by others.
- Many reviewers are subject experts and some are even notable authorities in the field – and are more likely to cite work themselves that they have had a hand in shaping or selecting for publication, so choose wisely.
- Always make the recommended corrections (Fahy, 2008a. 2008b; Rosenfeldt et al, 2000) and hopefully...
- With time, patience and perseverance, the citations will come!

48

Submitting the manuscript

- Make sure that the article is correctly formatted e.g. title page, contributor details, tables, double spacing etc.
- Make sure that you are using the correct referencing system (easier with EndNote, Reference Manager etc.)
- If writing in an English language journal, make sure that you know which kind of English you should be using
- Set the spell checker accordingly but do not rely on this as the sole means of checking your spelling -

49

Submitting the manuscript

- Make sure that the article is correctly formatted e.g. title page, contributor details, tables, double spacing etc.
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- Set the spell checker accordingly but do not rely on this as the sole means of checking your spelling –
- avoid errors such as lover disease!



50

Submitting the manuscript

- Make sure that every citation in the paper is listed in your reference list – and that these are correctly cited!
- Do not use acronyms (e.g. DOH, NHS, ZonMW) without explaining what they are – remember your audience!
- Try not to use abbreviations – but where permitted, use them sparingly and with great care
- Check spelling and grammar (then check it again!)
- Make sure that all tables, photographs, figures etc. are present and properly labelled – consider how they will look in the journal!
- Check that you are not breaching copyright for any illustration and obtain permission if necessary.

51

Submitting the manuscript

- Take your time!
- Put the manuscript in a draw for a week while you ask a trusted critical friend to review it for you.
- Proof read the article again once you have amended it and ask someone else to do this as well (preferably a native speaker)
- Write your submission letter with as much care and attention as the manuscript, and make sure that you 'sell' the paper to the editor as an appropriate one for publication.
- Cite current policy, scientific or clinical developments which support its publication (but do not argue that the study is unique – it is probably not!)

52

Submitting the manuscript

- Send or upload your article exactly as requested in the *Guidelines for Authors* or *Notes for Contributors* and then be patient!
- Expect disappointment
- Almost no article gets accepted on first submission. You will have to make amendments if the paper is accepted!
- Attend to all of the comments made by the Editor or reviewers and go through all of the aforementioned quality checks before resubmitting the article. It is not unusual for new errors to be introduced at this stage!

53

Submitting the manuscript

- Occasionally, a second or third review of the manuscript will be requested. This is NOT a bad sign and shows that your paper is still under consideration so...
- Do not fire off angry emails to the Editor saying that you have already corrected the script once.

54

Reasons for refusal

- The article is not ready – it may still be in draft form
- Poor English (which may also mean American English!)
- The article is too parochial (lacks broad appeal)
- The article is poorly or carelessly prepared
- The article is too short or too long
- The article is not relevant to the journal's readership
- The article is too dated
- The article contains nothing new or original
- The article lacks methodological or theoretical rigour

55

Reasons for refusal

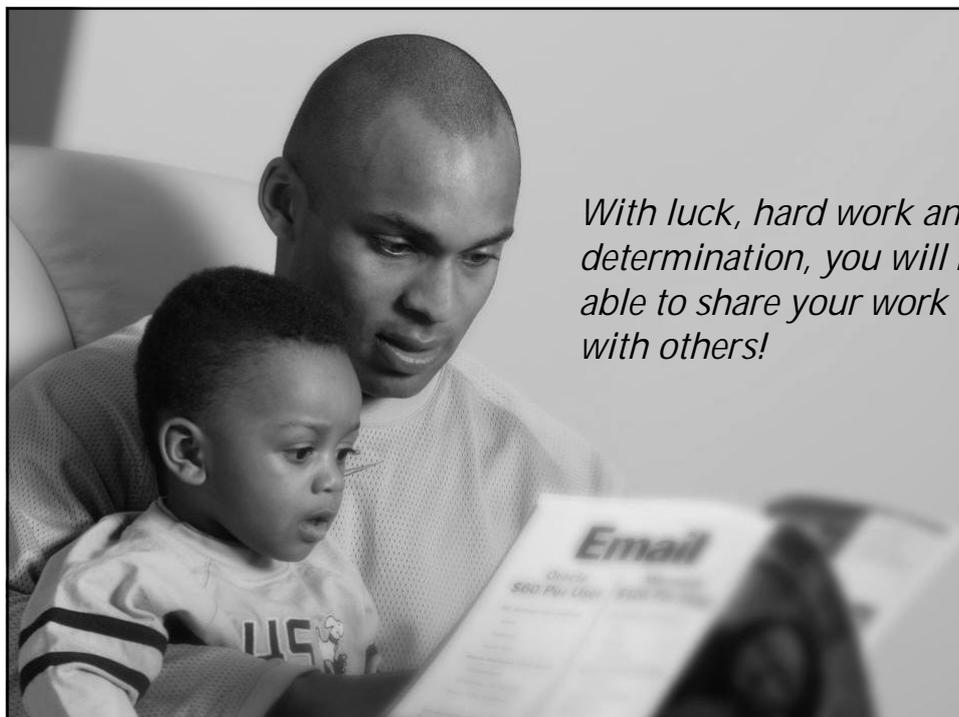
- The article may cover topics which have already been adequately addressed by the journal (including any articles in press)
 - The article includes material which you have already published elsewhere (duplicate publication)
 - The article reports data which has already been the subject of other thematic papers (salami slicing)
 - Sufficient numbers of papers from your country have already been published recently (representativeness)
 - The article may genuinely belong in an alternative journal (the content is too specialist)
- but this does not mean that the article is no good!

56

Remember...

- Journals may receive four, five or even more times the number of manuscripts that they can possibly publish in an acceptable time-scale
- Publishing houses are commercial businesses – they exist to make a profit for their owners or shareholders and are not (necessarily) interested in the publication of your particular study
- Building market share, maintaining an impact factor and improving sales are often what count
- Editors cannot entirely ignore these factors (and keep their posts) but...

57



References

Audisio, R.A.S., Stahel, R.A., Aapro, M.S., Costya, A., Pandey, M. and Pavlididis, N. (2008) Successful publishing: how to get your paper accepted. *Surgical Oncology*, doi.10.1016/j.suronc.2008.09.001

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60