

## Get Your Articles Published in MJSBH: learning from our own mistakes.

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### **Executive Editor MJSBH**

We are in the era of “publish or perish”. As a medical professional, if we do not have publication under our belt, the career will be stagnant. The publication has become mandatory for academic appointment and ladder. Because of conversion of many clinical centers to an academic institution, academic requirement has increased and this has mounted pressure on clinicians. In recent years the pressure has extended to MJSBH (Medical Journal of Shree Birendra Hospital) also, as there is exponential increase in number of articles submitted. In recent months, the visibility of our journal has increased because of inclusion of our journal into an open access system. This has raised the responsibility of editors and publishers to produce a high quality article<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand the demand on authors has also raised as they have to submit a quality and well prepared manuscript otherwise it will be rejected. The rejection rate of our journal for year 2012 was 30%, and will increase in coming years.

Through this editorial we would like to share some of our editorial experiences which may help authors to improve the acceptance rate of their manuscript. For last three years, the commonest problem of submitted article was formatting problem. Majority of articles submitted to MJSBH were not as per the guidelines of journal (Table 1). Over a period of three years only 16% of original articles and 31% of case reports were meeting the format criteria. All the original articles published in 1<sup>st</sup> issue of 2010 were not as per journal format and only one out of five case reports published were according to journal format<sup>2</sup>. Since then there has been a gradual improvement and adherence to format at the time of publication but at the time of submission majority of authors (90%) do not follow the instructions. During 2010-2011, there were very few articles submitted, so the editor had enough time to go through all the sections of the manuscript. But now, the situation has changed, the editors are loaded with plenty of articles as well as online works; so the editors will not be able to do the format editing. This will lead to higher rejection rate and necessitates better preparation of manuscript by the authors. Since formatting was the most common problem, this editorial would focus on some important aspect of an original article and discuss the important points to be considered while preparing a manuscript for MJSBH.

### **Manuscript preparation**

The manuscript must be typed double-spaced on A4 size with Times New Roman Font, size of 12 points. Margins should be a minimum of 25 mm. Number each page at top right. The pages should be numbered consecutively, beginning with the title page. Each section of the manuscript should commence on a new page in the following sequence: title page and running head, structured abstract, keywords, introduction, materials and methods, result, discussion, conclusion, acknowledgement, references, tables and figures with caption. Particular attention should be paid to ensure the manuscript adheres to the style of the journal in all respects. Please do not use any signs for e.g. “&” for “and” or “@” signs for “at the rate”. Always read few recent articles and have a detailed instruction to author before preparing the manuscript for submission.

### **Use of abbreviation**

Use only standard abbreviations; remember the manuscript will be read by persons from different speciality who may not be familiar with the abbreviation, which may be very common to you. So, spell out abbreviations when first appears in the text and give abbreviation in the bracket, then you can use the given abbreviation. It is not encouraged to use abbreviations in title and abstract.

### **Title of the article**

Nearly 60% of authors submitted their article with inappropriate title. The title is the most read part of any published article, so it has to be attractive and should raise the interest of readers. For example, the commonly placed term in most of our article is “study of.....at Shree Birendra Hospital”. If we put place of study in our title, the readers may skip the article just thinking that this covers a very limited area. Use of place of study should be discouraged.

### **Authorship**

The trend of including ghost author and gifted authors is still high in our journal. This may be because of various factors, but the authors have to realize that every published article is a legal document which is exposed to international community. Any scientific misconduct during the research and manuscript writing will attract international laws of publication ethics. If scientific

Table 1. Analysis of articles published in past three years.

Issue	Original article as per author guideline		Case report as per author guideline	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
2010(1)	0	3	1	4
2010(2)	1	6	0	3
2011(1)	1	6	1	2
2011(2)	1	6	1	2
2012(1)	2	8	1	2
2012(2) this issue	2	8	2	0
Total	7 (15.90%)	37 (84.09%)	6 (31.5%)	13(68.5%)

misconduct is proved, all the authors (including the gifted and ghost authors) will be equally penalized. So, as a principal author one must inform all the co-authors about the submission of the article and obtain written consent for publication.

The superscript number behind the name of each author indicates the affiliated institution of the author, these numbers are neither serial number nor they are rated according to the contribution. Various format of author's name is available, but since 2012 we started using full name to avoid confusion.

### Abstract

Abstract is the second most commonly read part of any article. Although abstract is placed at the top of any article, it has to be written at last. The abstract of an original article must be structured, and our journal follows the IMRDC (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusion) format followed by references. The abstract should not exceed 250 words. It is author's art to put their message in given word limit. So, if the word limit is followed there is high chance that correct information will be preserved during editing. We send abstract first to our peer reviewer to ask their interest in reviewing the article; if abstract is not well written, there is very high chance of refusal from reviewing process itself. Remember that there are no references in the abstract and use of abbreviation should be minimized.

### Introduction

Introduction should introduce your research title, do not write the existing information. It should give the following four information. 1) background of the research problem; 2) What is current practice for particular problem you are going to study; 3) What is

the aim of your study; and 4) What may be the clinical implication of your research results. Also do not forget the word limitation (250 for our journal); review of literature is unnecessary in introduction. Most authors include literature review in their introduction which makes the introduction longer. Remember introduction should introduce the research problem not the whole title.

### Methods

This part of an article has to be written meticulously. The following facts have to be incorporated in methods of any original article. Sequentially one should mention about: type of study, duration and place of study, sample size, how you selected the sample, inclusion and exclusion criteria, what were the parameters recorded and how they were recorded, how the data were analysed and what tools were used to do the analysis. If a standard procedure and tools are used during the research, there is no need of writing them, just the reference has to be mentioned. On the other hand if there is modification of procedure and a new tool has been used, the detailed description of these has to be given in methods. A flow chart of methodology is encouraged by many journals. There is no word limit to methods section, so it can sometime be very large. One should remember that the methods should be written such that any reader can replicate the research with ease by using the methodology. So, each step has to be sequential and clear.

### Results

This section should include the results of the research only. One should not discuss their result in this section. The use of graph and tables are encouraged, but it is not advisable to repeat the same thing which is shown in table or graph. The numbers of figures and tables

are also limited by many journals. The authors should adhere to the number permitted. Even though there are clear instructions on submission of figures, figures are submitted in various formats. A very common mistake done by authors in most of our article is: writing there were 50 male and 50 female and also producing a pi-chart of same thing. Duplication of information in any form should not be done in results section. Also results have to be in accordance to the title as well as the aim of the study. The results must match with the aims and objectives of research.

### Discussion

In this section, it is recommended to start with small background and then start discussing your results one by one. Most of our authors started discussing the existing literature and the results of their research were not highlighted. Ideally one should take their results one by one and compare with the existing literature then finally discuss difference or similarity. All the results have to be discussed without leaving any findings of the research. All literature review has to be pertinent to the result, there is no need to review the literature and fact which you cannot compare with present research results. Discussion must be logical and coordinated with each other.

### Conclusion

Analysing the manuscript submitted to our journal, we found that authors tend to write a long results incorporating the literature and existing information. Ideally the conclusion should answer the research question and objective of the study. Conclusion has to be given only from the results of the research, not from the literature review. It has to be concise and preferably in a single paragraph.

### Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement is not compulsory, and in fact only deserved candidates have to be acknowledged. Thanking chief of institution, patients, family members, staffs are rarely justified. If a person has substantially helped the author but did not fulfil the criteria of being co-author, then only they should be acknowledged.

### References

References are yet another important part and we found that almost all the authors submit their article, without paying attention to the referencing system. There are various referencing systems but MJSBH follows the Vancouver system. Referencing system is a game of punctuation, proper spacing and use of proper punctuation is very essential (Figure 1). This example is only applicable for journal citation whereas citation can be done for all types of document. It is recommended to go to the website for a detailed instruction of Vancouver system.

Finally, this editorial emphasized the need of following the author's guideline before submitting their article.

### REFERENCES

1. Joshi A. Medical Journal of Shree Birendra Hospital: Journey Continues. Editorial. MJSBH. 2012;11(1):1-3.
2. <http://nepjol.info/index.php/MJSBH/issue/view/246>

Figure 1. Vancouver style of referencing.

