

Writing for the **EXCHANGE** supplement



Writing for the EXCHANGE

Key benefits

- Writing experience (with further support and guidance if your article is accepted)
- A chance to reflect on, and learn from, your own experiences
- Exposure for your work or organisation (we're indexed in Pubmed and available online for free)
- A sense of belonging and contributing to a community of like-minded people

How does it work?

- When you submit an article (commissioned or exchanged) it is sent for **review**.
- If your article is accepted, you may be asked to **respond** to reviewer comments.
- The amended article is then **edited** – at this stage, further gaps or errors often become evident.
- You will need to **fill in any gaps** and **correct errors**.
- After editing is completed you will give **final approval**.

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Images are welcomed!

- Please send high-resolution (big file) versions of photographs to accompany the article.
- If individual patients can be identified, you need to get their written permission.
- Group photographs are okay – but explain the purpose and allow people to remove themselves from the frame.

**How can you improve
your writing?**

Be complete

Your article should answer the following:

- Why did we do this study/intervention?
- What did we do, and how?
- What did we find/what happened?
- What does this mean? What implications?
- What next? **or** What can we learn from this?
or Why is this useful to know?

Be clear

Use these questions to revise your work

1. Does it make sense as an article?
2. Are the measurements and terms consistent?
3. Is there jargon (unfamiliar terms)? (If yes, define!)
4. Are the words and sentences simple and short?
5. Is it objective and specific (no generalisations)?

Be **clear**: in detail

1. Does it make sense as an article?

- Read it to a friend – do they understand? Write down any questions and revise the article to make sure they are answered.
- Check that it follows a logical and predictable structure (the reader should almost be able to guess what will come next).

Be clear: in detail

2. Are the measurements & terms consistent?

- Compare apples with apples (eg., don't compare **percentage** of men to **number** of women – either use percentage for both, or number for both)
- Choose one term and stick to it (eg., **ophthalmic dispensing technician** should NOT become **ophthalmic technician** later)
- Use the same abbreviations throughout (eg., using **ACVA** and then later **VA** will be confusing)

Be **clear**: in detail

3. Is there ‘jargon’ (unfamiliar terms)?

- You understand the term (or word) – but does your audience?
- Don’t group nouns: NOT “**blind school studies**”; RATHER **studies in blind schools**
- Abbreviations can be jargon – write them in full the first time
- If in doubt, give the definition the first time you use a term or word .

Be **clear**: in detail

4. Are words and sentences simple and short?

- Don't try to impress with your vocabulary. Use plain, simple words. Eg:

utilise x	use ✓
in close proximity to x	near ✓

- Keep sentences short – you should be able to read them in **one breath!**

Checklist: Five tips

5. Be objective and specific (no generalisations)

- Don't overuse 'I' and 'we'
- No emotion words (shocked, surprised)
- Give the facts. Eg., **30% higher**, NOT “a lot higher”

SUMMARY

Remember that your reader won't be able to ask questions if information is missing, if language is confusing, or if data and graphs are presented in a confusing way.

Therefore, be as **complete** and **clear** as you can within the 800 words allowed.

The key to good writing is to **revise** – again and again – until you are satisfied!

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