

Getting the “Write” Right What Editors are Looking For: Pearls and Pitfalls

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Objectives



Following this lecture, the participants will be able to describe

1. What editors & reviewers want
2. Factors important in journal selection
3. The IMRaD Principle of paper writing
4. How to decrease writing hurdles
submission hurdles
acceptance hurdles
5. How to build success in writing

The Basics: Scientific Articles

First scientific journal –1665

By 2006 – est >70,000 sci journals

Plos One started publishing in 2006; by 2010 >10,000 articles

in 2012 >23,000 articles published: >2,000 per month!

Apr 2014- PUBMED > 23M abstracts; add a new abstract every second

Scientific articles

What was done

Why was done

How was done

What was learned

Acceptance rates <25%

Open communication

Reproducibility

Peer review

Free discussion

What do Editors and Reviewers Want?

- **Originality**
- **Importance of study**
- **Specificity/Relevance**
- Study design
- Methodology
- Data interpretation
- **Clarity of language presentation**

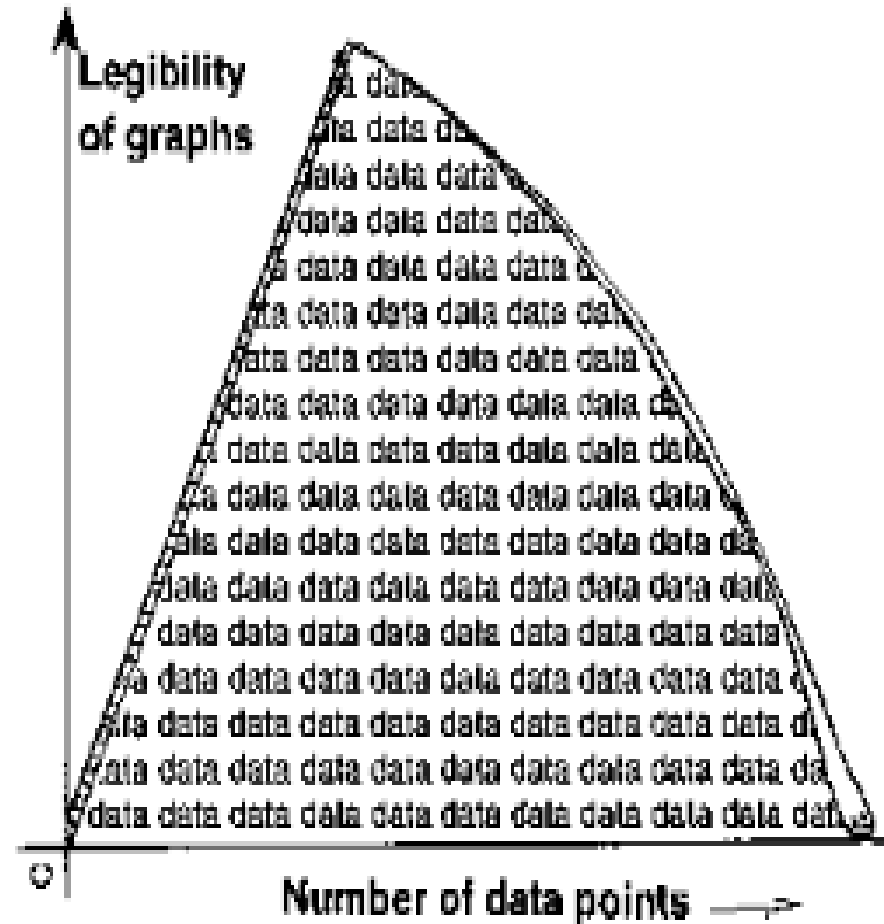
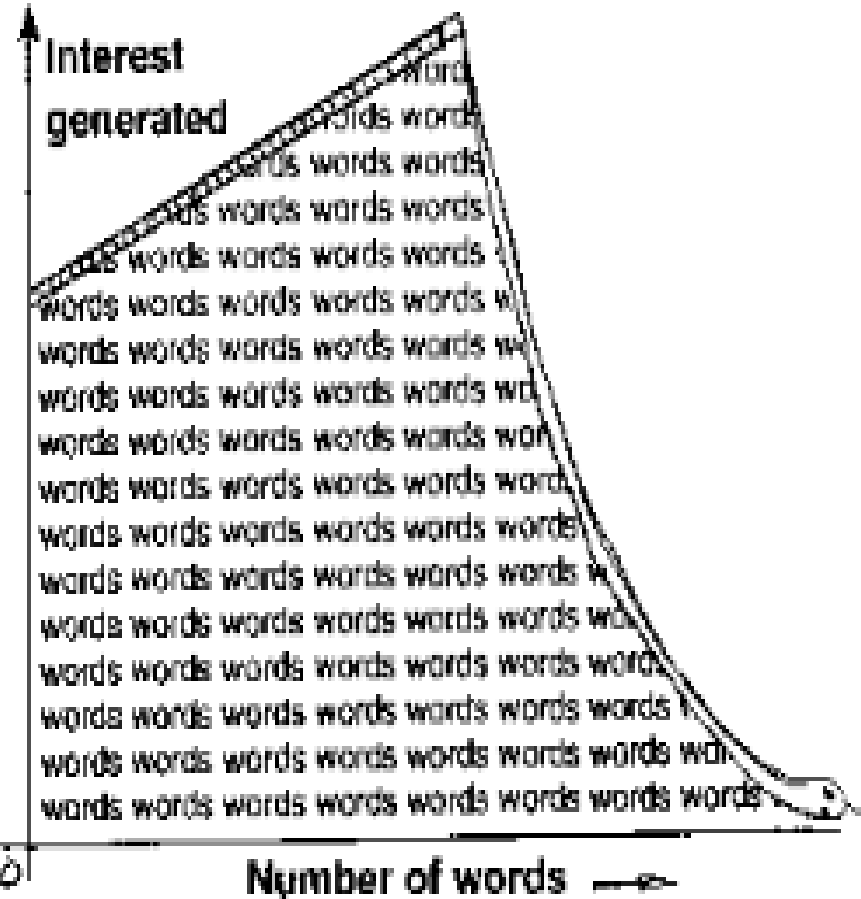


Originality

- **New observation**
- **New interpretation**
- **New synthesis**
- **New linkage**
- **New evidence**
 - **old idea**
- **Extension previous work**
- **Teaching moment**
i.e. in case series



Clarity / Presentation





Time to Think

**Message -one big idea
-take home message**

Journal Selection:

Market- identify target audience/goal

Format-original research, review, case series, commentary....

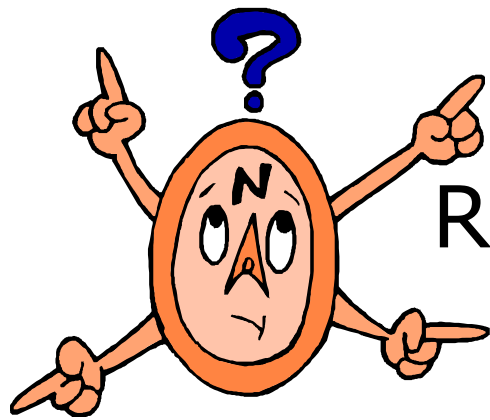
Identify journals that will serve your purpose
-read recent issues

Speed and probability of acceptance

Select 1st, 2nd, 3rd choice of journals so can quickly address rejection of the article

Look up "instructions to authors"

- most follow ICMJE (www.icmje.org)



IMPACT Factor

Reflects the number of times an article is cited in citation index; vary by area

Calculation

- *A = total cites in 2010*
- *B = 2010 cites to articles published in 2008-09 (this is a subset of A)*
- *C = number of articles published in 2008-09*
- *D = B/C = 2010 impact factor*

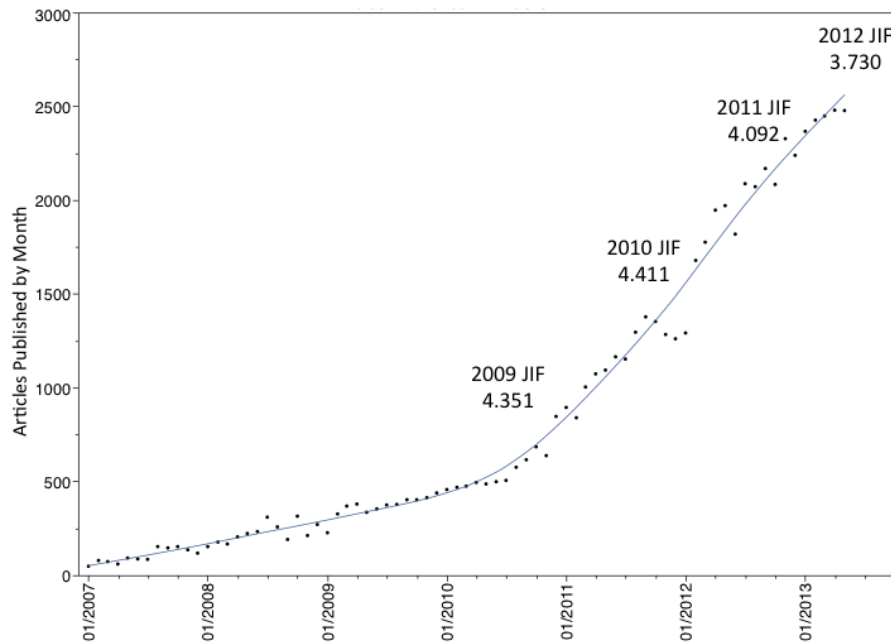
Real impact on health may bear no resemblance!

PLOS ONE Journal Impact Factor

Shows “impact” on JIF
of making
denominator bigger
JIF ↑ as surge articles
published ↑

Now ↓ - not due to
change in quality but
↑ denominator!

In 2012- PLOS ONE –
published 23,464
articles !!!!



[http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/06/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-plos-ones-impact-factor-2012-](http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/06/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-plos-ones-impact-factor-2012-3-730/)

[3-730/](http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/06/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-plos-ones-impact-factor-2012-3-730/)

Impact Factor: Different Areas

2014-means 2012-13

General Journals

NEJM - 54.4

Lancet - 39.2

JAMA - 30.4

BMJ - 16.4

CMAJ - 5.8

Gen Med Sci

Nature - 26.0

Science - 31.5

Specialty

PEDS

Pediatrics 5.3

J Peds 3.7

Surgery

Ann Surg 7.2

Am J Sports Med 4.7

Circulation 14.9

Nursing

J Clinical Nursing 1.2

Midwifery 1.7

Ann Rev Psychology 20.5

Ann Review of Imm 41.4

CA: Cancer Journal for Clinicians

162.5

“E” vs Print; Open Access

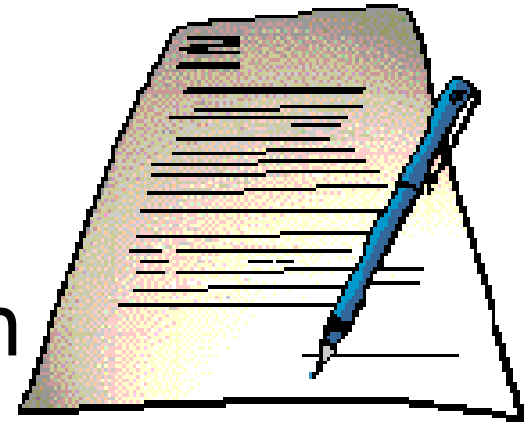
If peer reviewed

- “E” no difference to print
 - for CV, for promotion
- if journal in PUBMED likely read online
- **E faster- often “published ahead of print”**
- for all journals that do both E and Print **journal of record is the E journal**

Open Access: no fee to see

- Often charge for articles published
- MR NOT cover this cost
- Journal may wave costs in for some
- Read the author instructions BEFORE submit
- **Beware: journals pay to publish BUT not in PubMed**

Authorship



Who should be an author on your paper?

Who should be first author?

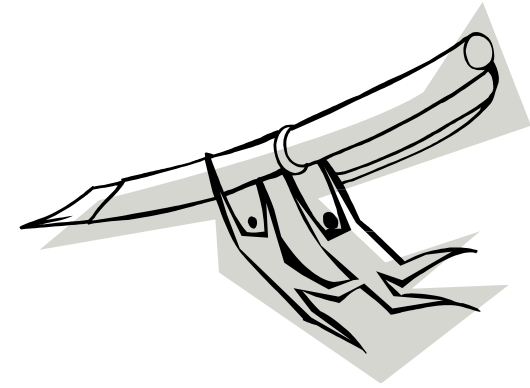
What is the appropriate author order?

<http://www.icmje.org/>

Dean HJ, MacDonald NE Can J Diabetes 2007;31:14-15.

http://www.diabetes.ca/documents/for-professionals/s_note313.pdf

Authorship 2

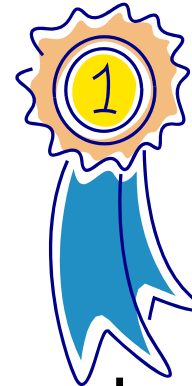


Who

- substantive contributions
to conception and study design
or data acquisition
or data analysis and interpretation
AND drafting or revising the paper
AND final approval of published paper

**ICMJE: International Committee
of Medical Journal Editors** <http://www.icmje.org/>

Authorship 3



Who should be first author?

What is the appropriate author order?

ICMJE: joint decision of authors

Historically first – did most of work, wrote first draft

last- senior

Current order often by size of contribution or based upon how cite-i.e. first 3-4 authors only

Conflict of Interest

- Taken very seriously
- **ICMJE** Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest
(<http://www.icmje.org/>)

Consistent form now used by major journals

- 5 pages long - **all authors must complete**
- asks very direct questions re \$, other relationships
 - usually posted at journal website

Title and Abstract

Do NOT start with
title and abstract

Leave to end

Major sales point
for paper



internationalgreensocialist.org

IMRaD Format

Authors require “organizational skills” not “literary skills”

Introduction Why did we do this work?

Methods What did we do? How did we do it?

Results What did we find?

and

Discussion What do the results mean?
What needs to be done now?



Introduction

Why and What

Why did we do the study?
i.e the problem

usually 2-4 paragraphs

pertinent refs only

What do we know?

no results

What don't we know

no conclusions

What did we do?

Methods



Science **MUST** be reproducible
methods section is key
= how study was done

Balance: describe everything in detail

leave out everything not need

Hint: new method, new type data- +++ detail
if what did different from standard then
describe in detail

if previously reported method - give ref
and less detail

Methods 2

Follow author instructions

- full protocols as appendices
- register **clinical trials******



US Nat Lib Med: [*pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/*](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)

Pan African Clinical Trials: <http://www.pactr.org/>

Be precise, avoid jargon

Ensure include consent

REB approvals

data analysis details

funding source if not on
title page

Do NOT mix results in this section

Results

Be **concise,**
logical

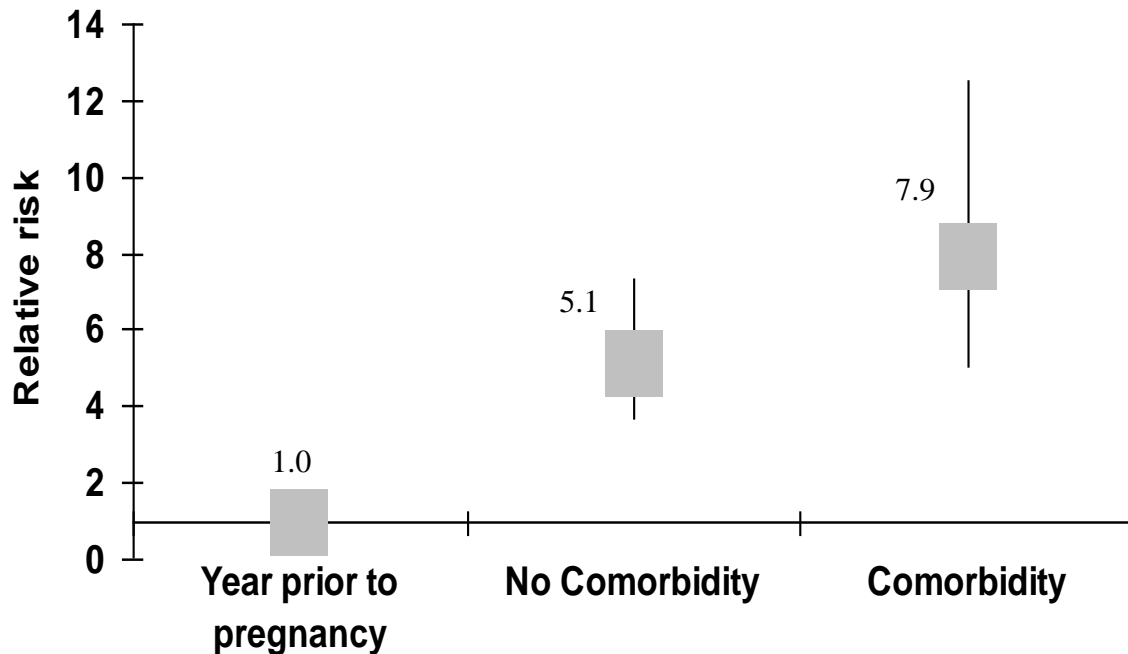
Only **important**
observations

Use **tables /**
graphs not
repeat in text

No repetitive
data- state
once and then
“similarly.....”

Present in **past**
tense

Relative Risk of 3rd Trim Hospitalization With and without Co-morbidities



*Dodds S, McNeil S, Fell D, Allen V,
Coombs A, Scott J, MacDonald N.*

CMAJ 2007;176:463-8.

Discussion / Interpretation

Tell Story: do NOT make it Dull!!

Words,
+++++



Hardest to write

- usually **4 parts**

1. Brief summary major findings

2. Explain findings, compare and contrast with other results in literature

3. Discuss limitations of study

4. Conclusions and future directions in field

Avoid redundancy. Do NOT repeat intro, methods or results. Do NOT over value your findings

Revise: *Content Edits, Copy Edits*

Expect to write 4 to 5 drafts

Content edits:

Is message clear?

Is purpose clear?

IMRaD followed?

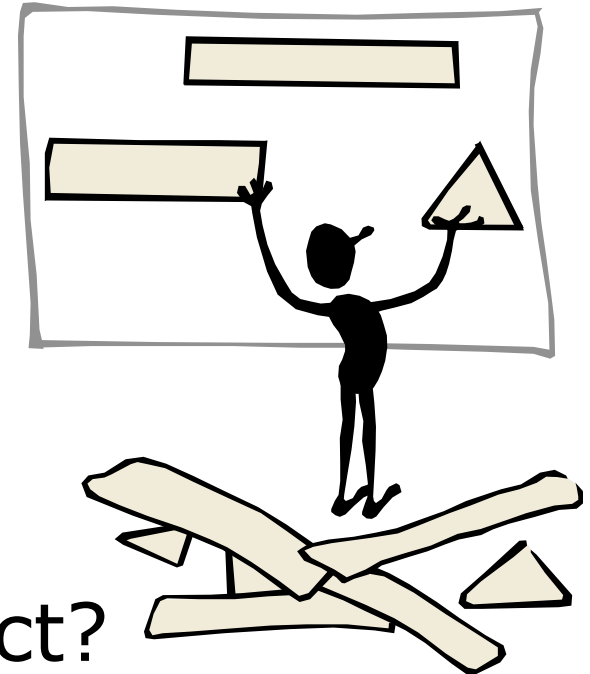
Is there flow?

Is there repetition?

Are all statements correct?

What do your co-authors say?

Have you addressed their concerns?



Revise 2

“Copy” edits:

Check facts and figures

Check spelling

Check grammar

Check references

Check permissions

table/figure previously
published

Check co-authors info, COI

Write acknowledgements

**Check that followed
“author instructions”**

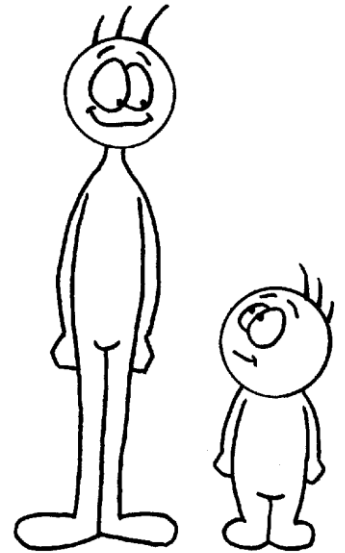


Abstract

Now ready to write abstract

150 to 250 words

review author instructions



tell.fll.purdue.edu

Treat as a mini paper

IMRaD-brief-purpose, methods, main findings

Principle conclusion only

Select key words- about 5 (use MeSH)

Title

**Choose with great care
most read part article!**

Concise and specific:

“Label” 6 to 12 words

“Read by 1000s;
entire paper by a few”

Write last

Tell your Story



THE LANCET



THE NEW ZEALAND
MEDICAL JOURNAL
Journal of the New Zealand Medical Association



Title-2



Paper title may NOT be same ***abstract title*** for presentation: think about your KT strategy

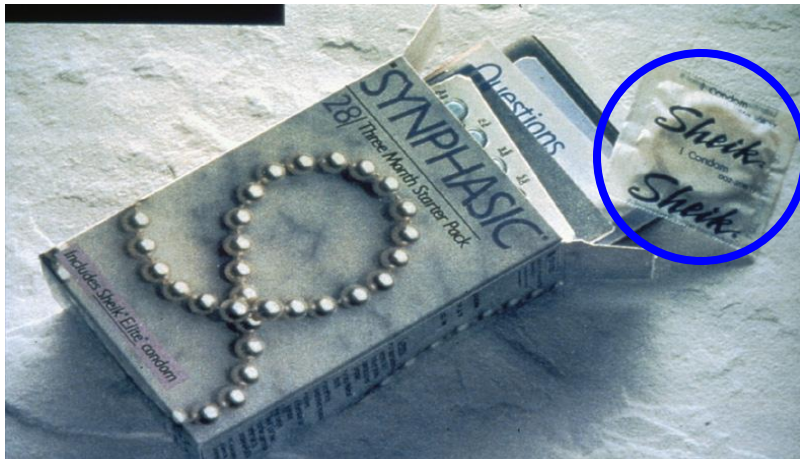
“Holes in Condom Use among Canadian College Students” Abstract Presentation title - ICAAC, Houston Tx 1989

“High-risk STD/HIV behavior among college students”

MacDonald NE, Wells GA, Fisher WA et al. JAMA, 1990; 263: 3155 - 3159.

Impact on System

Canadian EAC-STD
in Infants, Children
and Adolescents



***Holes in Condom
Use among
Canadian College
Students***

*.....newspapers, CBC,
CTV CBS, NBC etc.....*

**High-risk STD/HIV
behavior among
college students**

JAMA, 1990; 263:
3155 - 3159.

Cited >35 times.....in
textbooks...

Title Page



Title: Chosen with care

Follow Author Instructions

Title page

title

authors

institutions

correspondence address

funding support

declared COIs

7 Habits of Successful Authors

- 1.create programs of research
- 2.write, revise, rewrite
- 3.seek opinions on work from senior colleagues
- 4 submit cleanest version possible –but do not over revise to point never submit
- 5.revise rejected papers
- 6.never give up on “good data”
- 7.find most relevant journal for “impact” of your data

References and URLs-1

Handbook for Clinician Scientists: Chapter 15

Maitland K, et al. N Engl J Med. 2011;364:2483-95. Mortality after fluid bolus in African children with severe infection.

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMoa1101549>

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Garfield. History and meaning of the Journal Impact Factor. JAMA. 2006;295:90-93 <http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/295/1/90.full.pdf+html>

Smith R. Commentary: The power of the unrelenting impact factor— Is it a force for good or harm? International Journal of Epidemiology 2006;35:1129-1130. <http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/content/35/5/1129.full.pdf+html>

Dean HJ, MacDonald NE. Who is an author in medical publishing? Can J Diabetes 2007;31:14-15 http://www.diabetes.ca/documents/for-professionals/s_note313.pdf

References and URLs-2

www.prsinfo.clinicaltrials.gov/

Dodds S et al. Impact of influenza exposure on rates of hospital admissions and physician visits because of respiratory illness among pregnant women. *CMAJ* 2007;176:463-8.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1800555/pdf/20070213s00018p463.pdf>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/mesh.html>

MacDonald NE et al. High-risk STD/HIV behavior among college students *JAMA*, 1990; 263: 3155 - 3159.

Kotsis and Chung. Manuscript Rejection: How to Submit a Revision and Tips on Being a Good Peer Reviewer. *Plast. Reconstr. Surg.* 133: 958, 2014..