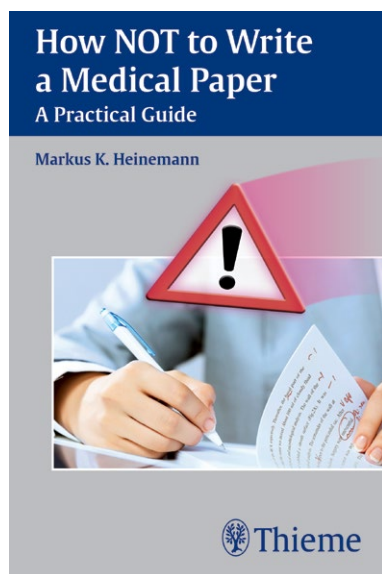


How NOT to write a medical paper. A practical guide

Markus K. Heinemann

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Editors and peer-reviewers spend much time reading manuscripts submitted for publication, and therefore they appreciate manuscripts that are easy to read and edit. As Editor-in-Chief of a scientific journal, *The Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeon (ThCVS)*, the author of the present book has obtained much experience by handling manuscripts submitted to this journal, written by young or by more trained surgeons. He decided to present this experience in a short, but very comprehensive book, with many examples on how to write and especially on how not to write a medical paper, at the same time listing all the important steps that a manuscript should follow in accordance with the guidelines implemented by the International Committee of Medical Editors (ICMJE). This makes captivating and also informative reading.

Although many articles and books have already been written instructing authors on how to organize their manuscripts in order to increase the chance of being accepted, practice has shown that badly written manuscripts continue to be submitted, as underlined by the author: *The flaws and mistakes as seen from the editorial angle, not the scientific one, repeat themselves ... on a daily basis.*

The book begins with a short presentation of the types of scientific papers (original articles, meta-analyses, reviews), and then presents the sections of a scientific paper. As it is essential for the authors to know how the peer-reviewers, experts on the topic of the research, will evaluate their manuscripts, this process is also presented in the book. The authors are given good advice on how to avoid possible criticism by writing a good manuscript.

Besides clear and accurate writing, the essence of a good medical / scientific paper is also the honest presentation of the scientific work. There is nowadays a great concern regarding the ethics' problems in the scientific publication, which have increased proportionally with the number of scientific papers in the context of an increasing pressure on having papers published. The present book includes a chapter on Publication Ethics with some bad examples offered from the author's experience, and describes aspects of the unethical conduct in publication (plagiarism, self-plagiarism, dual submission). This chapter refers only to the ethics of publication, and not to the ethical background of the research.

The processing of a manuscript from acceptance to publication is also described. The chapter *Good-to-Know* presents the steps of the production chain of a manuscript till publication, the indexing of articles in the major databases, the impact factors, and the politics of open access publication.

The last chapter of this book includes a *Final Advice* to the authors, briefly recommending the order of writing the different manuscript sections in order to save time during the writing process, and explaining how to choose the appropriate journal to submit their manuscripts.

The personal experience of the editor, the use of short (good, but especially bad) examples for illustrating the common mistakes of the authors and how to avoid them, as well as the concise (104 pages) but comprehensive text make this book easy and enjoyable to read. It is at the same time not only very useful for scientific writers, both the young and the more experienced, whatever their specialty, but also for reviewers and even for journal editors.

Monica Acalovschi
Cluj-Napoca, Romania