

Writing a Research Manuscript: Help From a New Series in the JAOA

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Good scientific writing is not a matter of life and death; it is much more serious than that.

—Robert A. Day and Barbara Gastel¹

In the March 2012 issue of *JAOA*—*The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, the American Osteopathic Association's editor in chief and the *JAOA*'s associate editors published an editorial titled "Realigning the *JAOA*: We Are Listening and Changing."² The editorial noted that the purpose of "this realignment initiative is not only to make the *JAOA* a shining jewel among the world's peer-reviewed journals; it is also for the *JAOA* to jump-start a more robust culture of research in the osteopathic medical profession." In addition, "we want to attract all scholarly works that explore in some way osteopathic principles and practice."² Many talented investigators are currently involved in the process of exploring science through these principles, and future investigators are waiting in the wings.

We understand, though, that the skills needed to perform the research are not the same as the skills needed to document the research and results. And staring at a blank Word document does nothing to get the creative

juices flowing. Therefore, the editorial staff of the *JAOA* are creating a series of articles designed to help you write scientific papers that are clear and concise and contain all the information necessary for editors and readers.

The first article in the series appears in this issue of *THE JOURNAL*. It is titled "Modern-Day Considerations for References in Scientific Writing"³ and begins on page 567. It addresses topics such as the following:

- which version of a source to use
- where to cite references in the text
- how to create the reference list
- which format to use for various information sources
- how to cite electronic sources
- how to avoid plagiarism and copyright infringement

Subsequent articles will address particular elements of a scientific paper that are often puzzling, such as the creation of tables and graphs, the when and how of writing abstracts, and how best to describe manual techniques. If you have ideas for additional articles that would be useful to you or simply have questions about the process, send them to jaoa@osteopathic.org and we will respond.

As Day and Gastel¹ noted, "a scientific experiment, no matter how spectacular the results, is not completed until the results are published. In fact, the cornerstone of the philosophy of science is based on the fundamental assumption that original research must be published; only thus can new scientific knowledge be authenticated and then added to the existing database that we call scientific knowledge." We hope that this

series of informational articles will help you add your scientific knowledge to the existing osteopathic data.

References

1. Day RA, Gastel B. *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*. 7th ed. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood; 2011.
2. D'Alonzo GE Jr, Patterson MM, Seffinger MA, Fitzgerald ME. Realigning the *JAOA*: we are listening and changing. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2012;112(3):117-118.
3. Riordan L. Modern-day considerations for references in scientific writing. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2012;112(8):567-569.

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