Writing a paper for publication in “Working Papers in the Health Sciences”

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Abstract
This paper is specifically designed to help authors write scholarly papers for publication in “Working Papers in the Health Sciences” (WPHS). A comprehensive model based on 11 steps and detailing the specific architecture expected for the journal is suggested for the writing of a range of papers. This is commensurate with the recognised style of similar academic journals.

Introduction
Working Papers in The Health Sciences is a peer-reviewed e journal hosted by The University of Southampton. In addition to facilitating emerging scholarly output from the healthcare academic community, a primary aim of the journal is to help undergraduate and post graduate health care professionals publish and showcase early stage academic work of a high standard. Post graduate students at early milestone stages of a PhD or clinical / taught doctorate programmes will find WPHS an especially suitable destination for initial academic output. The primary mission of this journal is to promote the development of health care knowledge and practice across the United Kingdom and beyond. The editor of WPHS welcomes manuscripts on a wide range of relevant topics and in a variety of forms:

Research
• Original emerging research reports
• Research proposals
• Service evaluations
• Critical reviews of the literature

Pedagogy and clinical practice
• Evidence based reports of clinical developments
• Theoretical or philosophical debate
• Pedagogical innovation

Series C: Student contributions
• Abridged student projects
• Health Care Dissertation Literature reviews

Many early career health care professionals believe that writing for publication is something that other people do i.e. Academics that have all the research at their fingertips, this is a wrong assumption. There is no mystery attached to writing for publication, it is a skill that anyone with the right amount of determination and application can acquire. All health care professionals and health care students whose work brings them into contact with patients/clients in clinical practice can be helped to write for publication. In particular, the reflective experiences of students in practice environments often reveal deficits which may help other practitioners to deliver better care, or to avoid unnecessary mistakes. Additionally such publications can function as a dissemination platform for the sharing of ideas. It is however important for novice authors to follow a systematic approach to the writing a scholarly journal paper as this helps provide a structure that contains key messages and ideas for potential readers (Dixon 2001).

Deciding what to write
The diverse parameters of WPHS is designed to encourage experienced and novice writers to select a topic that they are personally interested in and have investigated through their work, and where there is a paucity of information available in the traditional published press. Most topics are worth writing about. Like other journals WPHS seeks up-to-date referenced evidence based articles pertinent to all aspects of patient/client care.

• If you have written an assignment or a dissertation for an undergraduate or post graduate course, it may be adapted into an article suitable for publication in WPHS. Significant scholarly work which has been awarded a high grade should not be wasted but it will need adaptation before it is suitable for publication in a peer reviewed journal. It is important not to send the editor of WPHS copies of actual unmodified assignments as this will result in an automatic rejection.

• If you have implemented innovative work practices or pedagogical innovation then share them with others through publication in WPHS.

• If you are choosing a topic that features regularly in the professional press or at conferences, make sure that you give it a new slant, perhaps by reporting changes in practice based on best evidence.

• If you choose a topic that is seldom aired, do not assume that this is because it is of no interest. Your
Writing and structuring your article for WPHS

• The difficult part of writing is getting the structure right. Editors can sort out language errors but not a badly structured article. You need to ensure a logical flow of ideas and keep to WPHS word limit. Look at how other published authors have structured their work and talk to colleagues who have experience of writing.

• If you are clear in your mind what it is you have to say and who you are writing for, you will have less difficulty structuring the article and deciding what points to cover.

• Certain types of article tend to follow specific formats, e.g. literature reviews and research studies. Case studies and articles discussing for example, work and practice development initiatives can be more difficult to write and structure, as there is no real standard format. However this paper gives a model of writing which can be applied to any type of scholarly paper.

• Whatever the type of article you are writing; you will not get the structure right first time. You will need to practise. Even experienced authors need to write several drafts of a paper.

• Remember, when drawing on the work of others, you need to reference them. WPHS journal guidelines on academic writing and publishing make it clear that the journal website inform you of the journal’s referencing style which in this case is Harvard. Direct quotations, facts and figures, as well as ideas and theories, must be referenced. Submission of references that are inaccurate, incomplete or in the wrong style will result in a rejection of the paper. N.B Optimally and when available all references should be submitted via a separate “EndNote” file.

• Once you have finished your article ask a colleague to be a critical friend and read it to see if it is written clearly and makes sense.

Word length

Most articles, including literature reviews, should be no more than 3000 words in length (excluding abstract and references). The body of original research studies may be up to 5000 words in length. Shorter reports of approximately 2500 words are appropriate for reporting interim results of studies and for discussions of topical issues. Exceptionally shorter or longer submissions may be possible following discussion and at the editor’s discretion.

A model for structuring an academic paper for publication in WPHS

Most authors will find the following model containing 11 steps important in the construction of the basic architecture of any scholarly paper. This model of writing an academic paper reflects the literature (reporting tool developed by Heuter and Parahoo (2012)).

1. Title page
   This should be provided as a separate file in the submission process. It should include the full title of the manuscript; full names of all authors, their job title, and their affiliation; and full contact details of the corresponding author (address, telephone, fax and email).

2. Title of the paper
   The title of the paper should reflect the subject clearly, accurately and succinctly.

3. Abstract
   Most articles, including literature reviews, should be no more than 300 words for full articles, and 200-250 words for shorter papers. The abstract should provide a summary of the article, including results, methods, conclusions, and conclusions as appropriate and commensurate with the type of paper. This should be followed by between 3 and 5 key words designed to help readers find the paper easily in electronic searches. Referal to the key words used in major databases (CINAHL, Medline, etc.) is advisable as this will help others in the future to find your work on citation indexes. The abstract is one of the most important parts of the paper as this gives potential readers the opportunity of continuing or not with the rest of the paper.

4. Literature review/Background
   The importance of the paper should be fully justified and the context explained. Writers are expected to have undertaken a full and comprehensive review of the literature which cite the bibliographic data bases they have searched i.e. full details of the search strategy should be included. The review should identify and describe pertinent theoretical frameworks and model. For example Lattimer et al (1998) published a paper entitled “Safety and effectiveness of nurse telephone consultation in out of hour’s primary care: randomised controlled trial.” It is evidently clear from the title that this study pertained to the ability of nurses to give appropriate telephone consultation in primary care. The limitations of hour’s periods and furthermore that the study utilized a randomised controlled trial method to determine how effective and safe nurses were at giving advice.

5. Aims/objectives/research questions/hypotheses
   These should be fully explicit within the paper. Without a clear definition of the main content, findings, and/or argument of the paper. Furthermore the abstract should give brief details of the background, aim, designs, results, and conclusions as appropriate and commensurate with the type of paper. As appropriate and depending on the type of paper being written, the design of the study should be fully explained and should be appropriate for the journal to which it is being submitted.

6. Methodology or Design and method
   As appropriate and depending on the type of paper being written, the design of the study should be fully explained and should be appropriate for the journal to which it is being submitted. Journal word limits often prohibit detailed and exhaustive reporting of methods and therefore authors need to be selective in their presentation. The use of tables, charts and diagrams may be appropriate to present the results and conclusions of the study.

7. Data analysis
   The results of the study being reported (or critical review of the literature) should be discussed. The results need to be explained and interpreted within the context of previous studies. Pertinent points should be reiterated within the body of the text.

8. Discussion and interpretation (including limitations)
   The author should write a balanced discussion where all possible explanations for the results given and where appropriate the results are discussed in the context of previous studies. All the results should be fully discussed and all limitations acknowledged and discussed. For early or developmental work the author should fully explain the next steps to be taken and give details.
of the time line for the remainder of the study being reported

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Even for early reported work and where appropriate the author should fully justify the conclusions made and make as applicable recommendations for policy, health care practice or further research. The results or conclusions should be couched or orientated towards practice especially if the emerging or final results are generalizable.

11. Key points

Some authors complete their academic paper with a short list of 4-6 key points.

The next step in your paper-writing journey

- Send the article to the editor of WHPS
- All articles are subjected to the peer review process which means they will be commented on by established experts in the field. Do not be put off when the journal sends the article back to you asking for revisions to be made. This is very common and the aim is to help you improve the article.
- Do not get too disheartened if your article is rejected. Reflect on any comments and send consider amending your paper for resubmission or perhaps consider another journal
- After peer review, successful papers must be formatted using Adobe InDesign which is hosted by most universit IT Departments.
- The publication process is designed to ensure that WPHS contains material directly or indirectly related to the health care of patients/clients that is of use and relevance to their readers. The process also aims to produce a published article of which the author can be proud.

Conclusions

The basic architecture of any academic paper follows a number of steps designed to allow the author to tell the story of their work to potential readers and its applicability to their profession. Academic rigour in the preparation of a paper is likely to enhance its acceptability for publication. All papers for WPHS are blind peer reviewed by 2 academics with significant publication experience.

Headings the use of tables, illustrations and charts, the use of abbreviations and units and details of how to obtain permission to use other material are all detailed within the journal website. It is important for authors to declare if there is a potential conflict of interest and include any information on funding for the work being undertaken.

Key points

1. Working Papers in the Health Sciences is a peer-reviewed e journal hosted by The University of Southampton
2. The editor of WPHS welcomes manuscripts on a wide range of relevant topics and in a variety of forms:
3. It is important to follow a systematic approach to the writing of a scholarly journal paper.
4. An assignment or a dissertation written for an undergraduate or post graduate course may be adapted into an article suitable for publication in WPHS.

References

