

The template on the following pages may be helpful if...

- ...you need to write a clinical research article
- ...you dislike starting to write on a blank page
- ...you want to ensure essential elements make it into your manuscript
- ...you have only 5 minutes to think about your manuscript today

Whether you have 5 minutes or 5 hours, use this template to move your work ahead by capturing thoughts and information that will enable you to begin writing with *something* of value already on the page.

The prompts will not necessarily make it into your manuscript, but the information they help you capture will.

Enjoy, and please send me your feedback!

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INTRODUCTION

What is known about your topic?

[background]

It is understood that _____

What is unknown about your topic?

[hook]

We do not understand _____

What question did you ask (only the main one)?

[study question]

Our primary question was _____

What did you think the answer would be?

[hypothesis]

We hypothesized that _____

Why did you ask this question?

[clinical relevance]

The answer is important because _____

Who cares about this question?

[target audience]

The findings of this study are important to _____

What secondary question(s) did you ask?

[secondary questions]

Our secondary question(s) was/were...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

METHODS

How did you go about asking your questions?

[paragraph 1]

Study design (eg, retrospective, cohort, review) _____

Data source(s) _____

Time period _____

Location(s) _____

Who were your subjects and how many were there?

[paragraph 1/2]

Age? _____

Race/ethnicity? _____

Sex? _____

Other relevant characteristics? _____

Comparability of study groups? _____

How did you identify subjects/studies?

[paragraph 2/3]

Inclusion criteria? _____

Exclusion criteria? _____

What were your outcomes of interest?

[paragraph 2/3]

Primary outcome _____

Secondary outcomes

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

METHODS (continued)

How did you measure your outcomes of interest?

[paragraph 3/4]

Who did the measuring? _____

What were units of measurement? _____

At what time points did you measure? _____

How precise were your measurements? _____

How did you handle interobserver disagreement? _____

What equipment did you use (including model, manufacturer)?

[paragraph 4/5]

Medical devices _____

Instrumentation _____

Measurement tools _____

Software _____

Other _____

How did you analyze your data?

[paragraph 5/6]

Types of statistics presented _____

Statistical tests used _____

Statistical software (version, manufacturer) _____

Alpha level? _____

Power analysis? _____

What kind of ethical approval did you receive?

[first or last paragraph]

IRB approval (number) _____

Patient/parent consent _____

Exemption _____

RESULTS

What were the answers to your questions?

Primary question _____

Secondary questions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DISCUSSION

Provide a brief summary of your study:

How did you address your main question? _____

What new findings do you report? _____

Which other studies have investigated this topic?

Study 1 _____

Study 2 _____

Study 3 _____

Study 4 _____

Study 5 _____

Study 6 _____

How is your study stronger/different than others?

(Compare with studies listed above.) _____

How do your results compare with other studies?

(Compare with studies listed above.) _____

DISCUSSION (continued)

Were these the results you expected? If not, what possible mechanisms are at play?

What are the implications of your findings?

For patients _____

For clinicians _____

For other researchers _____

For society _____

Other _____

What were the strengths and limitations of your study?

Example

Limitation: *Our sample size was small*

Importance? *We may have failed to detect significant differences*

Justification? *The sample size is reasonable given the rarity of the condition*

Limitation 1: _____

Possible effects? _____

Justification? _____

DISCUSSION (continued)

What were the strengths and limitations of your study? (continued)

Limitation 2: _____

Possible effects? _____

Justification? _____

Limitation 3: _____

Possible effects? _____

Justification? _____

Limitation 4: _____

Possible effects? _____

Justification? _____

What questions remain unanswered?

Future research should focus on _____
