

Editorial

The “write” approach to publish

The *Journal of Conservative Dentistry*, since its inception in 1998 has evolved in terms of scope, content, and reach. Indexing the journal in Pubmed,^[1] completion of updating our archives from 1998 till date and in making *J Conserv Dent* a bimonthly journal^[2] are the initial few steps taken by our team in making our journal in par with other reputed and indexed international journals. We currently handle over 400 new submissions in a year, which are processed in an organized manner. The task of the editorial team is to publish manuscripts appropriate to the scope of the journal and also to assist researchers in converting their valuable research into quality publications. Authors would benefit if they understand the stages involved in the metamorphosis of a manuscript from the phase of new submission to the final printing phase. The objective of this editorial is to make authors understand this complex process and thereby improve the quality of submissions thus reducing the turnaround time from the date of submission to the date of publication.

The modus operandi of article processing begins with each one of the submitted manuscripts being initially reviewed by the Editorial office for technical approval. Those manuscripts that are not prepared based on the author guidelines will be resent for *technical modification* prior to the peer review process. Articles that do not fit into the scope of the journal are rejected and recommended to be submitted in some other suitable journal. Manuscripts that are approved to be in the right format and which fit into the scope of the journal would be sent to two or more expert reviewers selected *randomly* from the Editorial Board of our journal. The article file alone is sent for review without revealing the identity of the authors to the reviewers. The corresponding author will be informed about the reviewers' comments, suggestions, modifications, and acceptance/rejection of manuscript keeping the reviewers names blinded. This double blinding of both the authors and reviewers from each other ensures that the reviewing process is fair. This cycle where the comments are being sent from reviewers to authors and their replies to the same continues till the reviewers find the article suitable for publication. In certain instances, articles are rejected for not being able to answer the queries raised by the reviewers. Articles once accepted by the reviewers would then be sent by the editorial office to the publisher for postacceptance production work. A separate technical team by the publisher would be responsible for copy editing the article for grammar, punctuation, print style, and reference verification. The final formatted page proofs will then be sent to the corresponding author and to the editorial office for approval prior to online and print publication of the same in our journal.

The time taken from submission of an article to its acceptance and publication varies among the submissions based on the articles merit and as well as to the degree to which an author follows the journal submission guidelines. An exponential increase in the number of new submissions over the past few years and in order to decrease the turn over time from the time of article acceptance to the actual date of publication has been the reason for turning *J Conserv Dent* into a bimonthly journal from this issue onwards.

In our five years of editorial experience, we have observed that an article is resent multiple times and remains with the authors, in technical modification phase (prior to peer-review process) for a prolonged duration. The most common reason for the delay in this phase is that the many authors fail to comply with certain submission guidelines. To completely eliminate or expedite the technical modification stage, we request the authors to follow few simple instructions during manuscript writing.

- The rule of thumb in writing a good scientific manuscript is to read the author instructions thoroughly prior to start of writing the article. *The Journal of Conservative Dentistry* follows to a great extent the “Uniform requirements for Manuscripts submitted to Biomedical Journal” developed by *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors* (April 2010).^[3] One of the most important requirements is that the author should provide a short running title along with the main title in the title page. The running title should not be more than 50 characters. For example, if the article is titled as “Assessing the Response of Dental Pulp To Collagen and Mineral Trioxide Aggregate Cement when used as Pulpotomy Agents In Primary Dentition”, the running title should be appropriate to the title like “Dental pulp response to collagen and MTA as pulpotomy agents”. The authors should understand that the main title and running title are not the same and should avoid repeating the title as running title. Another important point to be considered by the author is that the word limit of the article should be followed according to the journal's guidelines. As the saying by Mark Twain goes “*Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out all the wrong words. To get the right word in the right place is a rare achievement. Anybody can have ideas—the difficulty is to express them without squandering a quire of paper on an idea that ought to be reduced to one glittering paragraph*”. The word limit for original research articles and case reports is up to 2000 words excluding abstract and references. Whereas the word limit for a short communication is only 750 words excluding abstract and references.
- The abstract and keywords form an important aspect of the manuscript, because it is the part that gets

indexed in electronic data bases. The editors, referees, and readers tend to read the abstract first and can be persuaded or put off from reading the main manuscript. The abstract should summarize the way the research was carried out and what the outcome of the study was. Our journal prefers a structured abstract of 200 words (Objective, Methods (or) Design, Statistical analysis, Results, and Conclusion) for an original research article.

- The authors are to provide 3–10 key words or short phrases that will assist in cross-indexing the article. Key words should be placed beneath the abstract and terms from the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) list of PubMed (US National Library of Medicine) are preferable. For example, keywords like “irrigant” are to be avoided since it is not a MeSH term, whereas providing key words like “root canal irrigants” are preferred.
- The authors should realize that the process of writing the research ideally begins during the research planning, and continue while the research is being implemented. The study immaterial of being a clinical trial or an *in vitro* research should be astutely planned with the assistance of a statistician with regard to sample size, statistical analysis, and interpretation. We would like to notify that many research articles with remarkable rationale *lack in their statistical representation*. There are many tests available, conventional as well as esoteric, but choosing a suitable test for interpretation is pertinent. Getting the data analyzed by the statistician after the completion of the study without prior planning is not the precise way of doing the research. We also encourage young researchers to take effort in understanding the principles involved in statistics. The exact statistical tests, the software and the version used for data interpretation should be included in the end of methodology section.
- The results section should be written as brief and uncluttered as possible. The two main points to be remembered: first, only relevant results related to the question and hypothesis posed in the “Introduction” section should be addressed. Second, the author should organize the presentation of results. The “Results” section should be written chronologically and continue logically to the end.^[4] A mixture of text, tables, and illustrations can be used to elaborate the results, but care should be excised to avoid duplicating the information in both graphs and table. The number of graphs or tables that the journal permits for a manuscript will vary depending on the type of article and the number of parameters assessed in the study. The authors should avoid providing tables that represents the raw data of all samples (collected during the study). The authors have to consider the constraints in printing color pictures and should limit the number of pictures to two. Figures showing samples, armamentarium, and materials used in the study are to be avoided. If the

authors are to provide more than two images (as in case reports) they can format the multiple images into a single composite image having subdivisions like Figure 1a, 1b, and so on with suitable legends. A maximum of two composite images are allowed for case series. The authors are encouraged to provide flowcharts for studies that involve complex methodology, this will aid in better comprehension of the study by the readers.

- One other important observation made is that the “References” section also has many typographical errors. The authors should ensure that the referencing style is in accordance to that of author’s guidelines and limit the number of references to 15 for case reports and 25 for original research. Quoting recent relevant references (preferably research published in the past 2–3 years) and citing them in chronological order (order of occurrence) in the text is essential. Use of appropriate citations for the journal references is mandatory, for example, citing the journal as “J Conserv Dent or J Endod” rather than “JCD or JOE” in the “Reference” section is preferable.
- Any scientific article needs to be organized and should communicate the information clearly. Manuscripts are better written in active voice, which delivers the meaning with ease (passive voice). The meaning of the manuscript is clear when written in active voice (active voice). The author should understand that when drafting or revising a paper, they need to keep three main things in mind: *to be clear, to be accurate, and to be concise*.^[5] Each author has their own style of writing and a well presented paper makes the editorial office’s and reviewer’s job much easier.
- We also like to insist that the author has to reply and revise to all the queries raised by the editorial office or reviewer. The authors have to upload a separate word document (not on the first page of main manuscript), which addresses the point to point reply to the queries raised, along with the revised document. The revised changes can be made in the main text in “track changes” mode to ease the work of editorial office and reviewers.

It requires a good team effort from the authors, editorial board, referees, and publishers to make the journal successful. We hope that this editorial would help both the authors as well as our journal in the long run. We also take this opportunity to thank the reviewers for sharing their invaluable time and intellect in enabling us to improve the quality of articles published in our journal.

“Write fully” Yours

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Journal of Conservative Dentistry

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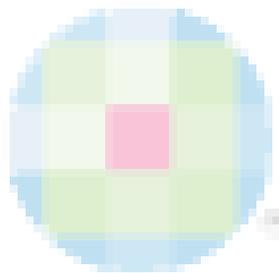
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