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2001

Write on Workshop: how to write articles and get them published

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Publication details

van Beurden, E, Newell, S & Rissell, C 2001, 'Write on Workshop: how to write articles and get them published', paper presented to NSW Health Promotion Research Forum, Sydney, NSW.

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"Write on" Workshop: How to write articles & get them published

Eric van Beurden[1]

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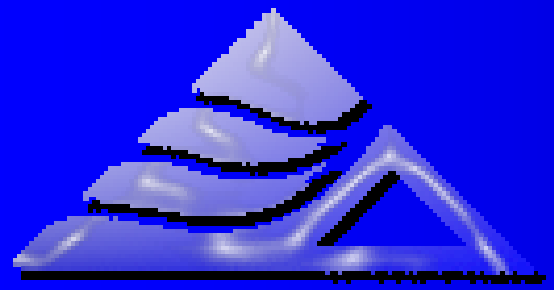
Health Promotion Units:

1. Northern Rivers Area Health Service

2. Central Sydney Area Health Service

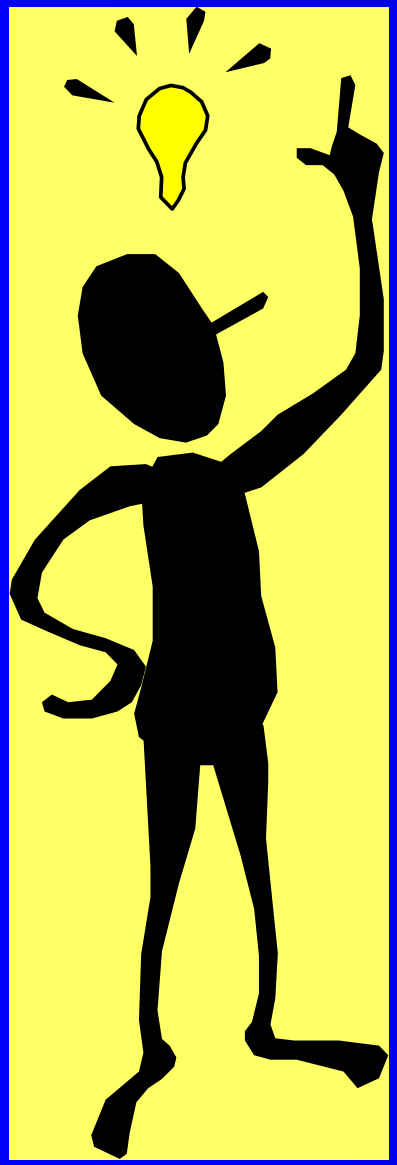


NSW Health Promotion Research Forum
(November 2001)

Why publish?

Build theory
Communicate
Change practice
Do justice to effort
Esteem & career
Get grant$

What can I write?



- Letter to editor
- Book review
- Brief report
- Scientific paper
- Review article
- Policy statement
- Theory
- Monograph

What does it take?

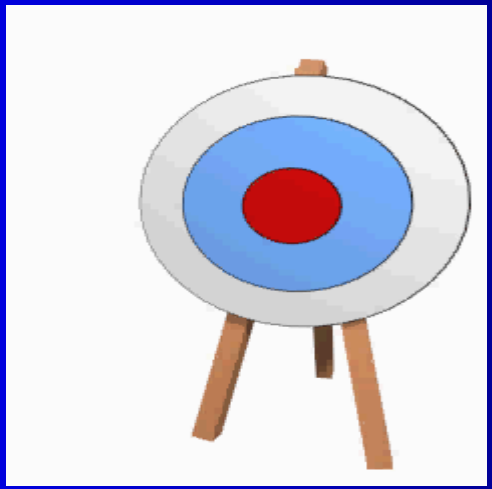
- Practice
- Patience
- Persistence

Should I write with coauthors?

- Many hands make write work!
- Too many spoil the plot!
- Opportunity & agreement every step.
- Authorship guidelines.

How can I focus my thoughts?

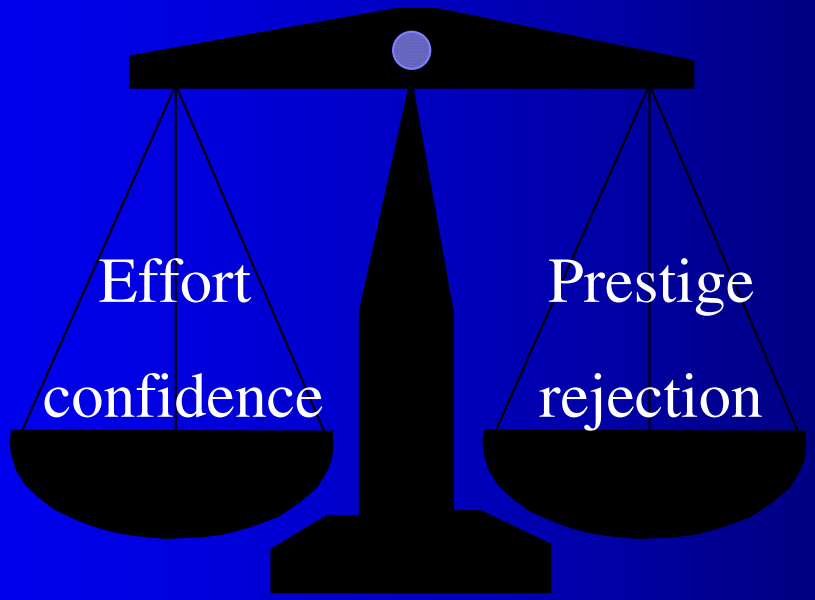
- Why did we do it?
- What's new about it?



- What's interesting?
- Take home message?
- Who for?

How do I choose a journal?

- Audience
- Is it on medline
- Content, debate, style
- Editorial goal



The purpose of the *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* is to facilitate communication between researchers, practitioners and policymakers involved in health promotion activities. Preference is given to practical examples of policies, theories, strategies and programs that utilise educational, organisational, economic and/or environmental approaches to health promotion. We welcome papers or brief reports on programs, professional viewpoints, guidelines for practice or evaluation methodologies.

How do I start?

- 2 - 3 hrs
- No distractions
- Read read read
- Succinct title
- Main sections
- Key points
- Prioritise
- Do an outline

What's in the outline?

- Problem
- Purpose
- Theory
- Design
- Hypothesis
- Sample
- Measures
- Results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

How can I test the water?

- Run outline by peers
- Contact editors
- Send outline

Dear Editor,

Would you consider the attached outline of our paper and tell us if our manuscript might be suitable for publication in the Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport.

The baseline survey of Move It Groove It has produced new insights into child Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) which we think would be of particular interest to your readers. MIGI is a 3 year intervention trial testing the efficacy of an innovative integrated promotion of physical activity in primary school children.

If you consider this relevant and of interest to your readers we will submit the article for review.

Yours sincerely

What order do I write the sections?

Sallie's preference

Methods

Results

Introduction

Discussion
Conclusions

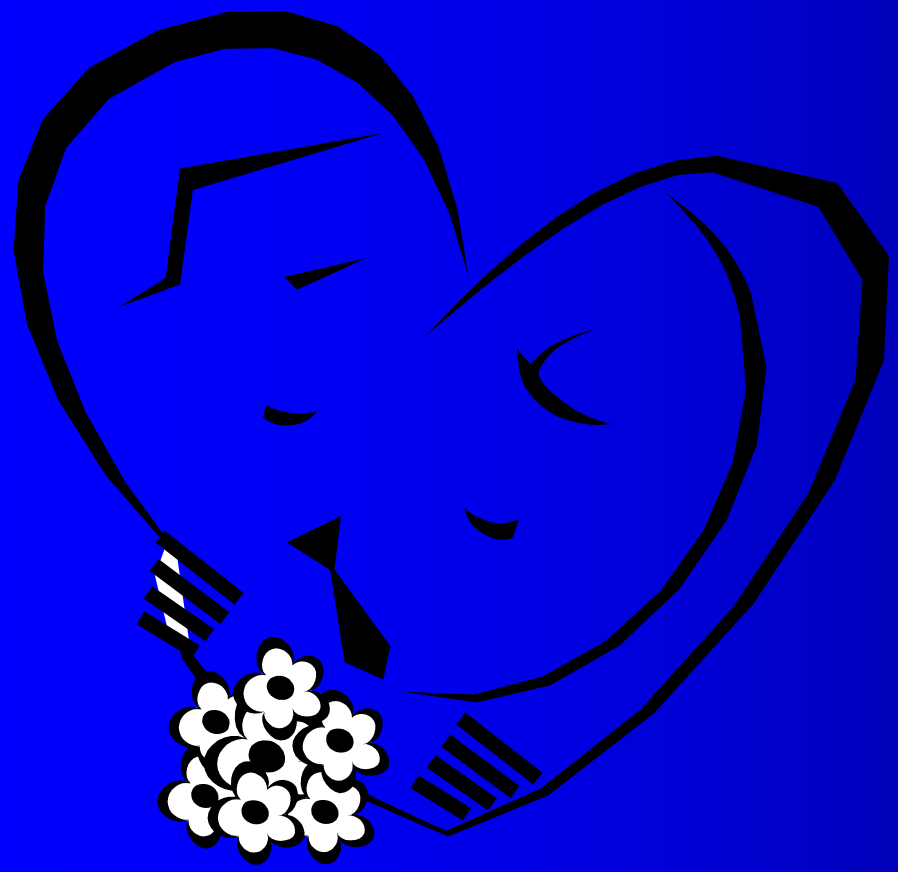
Abstract

Acknowledgments

References

How can I make it readable?

KISS WORD TEST



- accomplish
- additional
- conjecture
- demonstrate
- fabricate
- subsequently
- terminate
- utilise

KISS PHRASE TEST

- In view of the fact that
- if it is assumed that
- on a regular basis
- make an adjustment to
- take into consideration
- try out
- count up
- have been shown to be

Context problems

The printer was connected to the computer, but it was found to be defective.

I lunched with a friend, who has just started a business with clients, at the café, down the road.

Ambiguity

Grammar problems

Assessment of the situation should precede implementation of the program. (Passive verb)

Did the horse get up Cuthbert

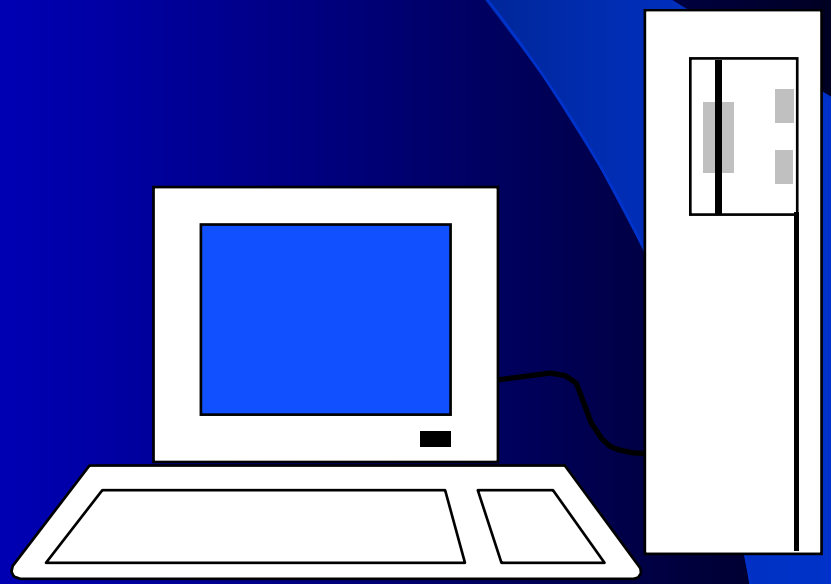
(Poor punctuation)

Style problems

- Jargon
- Complicated expression
- Verbosity
- Boring build-up to highlight
- Repetition
- Review, review , review!!!!

What's the best way to do references?

- Electronically (eg: Endnote, Reference Manager)
- Easy to edit
- Easy to change style



How many drafts before I send it?

10

- Quick first
- Careful rework to second
- Overhaul by co-authors
- Use track changes or printout to third
- Tidy up to final

What does submission entail?

- Check **all** Instructions to authors
- Reference format ok?
- All details on title page?
- Number of copies/disks ok?
- Cover letter includes specific statements
- Cover letter promotes relevance

Dear Professor Reeve,

Submission of article: ***Primary School Physical Education lessons. How physically active are they?***

Please find enclosed our manuscript *Primary School Physical Education lessons. How physically active are they?* This manuscript represents results of original work that have not been published elsewhere (except as an abstract in conference proceedings). This manuscript has not and will not be submitted for publication elsewhere until a decision is made regarding its acceptability for publication in Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport. If accepted for publication, it will not be published elsewhere. Furthermore, if there are any perceived financial conflicts of interest related to the research reported in the manuscript, we have disclosed it in the Author's Notes.

This manuscript reports on the results of one of three subgroups within a larger project (Measurement of physical activity in (a) Physical Education classes, (b) Fundamental Movement Skills, and (c) Playgrounds). It is anticipated to publish one paper per subgroup at baseline and one at completion plus a summary paper for the overall program. There may be up to 2 more papers on distinct intervention processes.

Yours sincerely

Dear Dr Bates,

In this our second submission from the Move it Groove it Program we explore an important issue regarding PE interventions that has been raised in recent theoretical discussions (eg Kemper's 2000 review of pediatric exercise).

We know of no other published evaluation which addresses the problem of how to balance potentially competing objectives to both improve child fundamental movement skills and increase physical activity within the context of existing PE lessons.

We feel this will be of interest to your readers and contribute to thinking on best practice in the field. We hope you agree and look forward to the reviewers' comments.

Regards,

What response?

- Rejection
- Noncommital revision
- Accept pending revision
- Outright acceptance

Dear Dr. Dietrich:

We are pleased to inform you that your paper is acceptable for publication provided minor revisions are made.

Please carefully address the issues raised in the comments, point by point, and make appropriate changes in the manuscript, or provide a suitable rebuttal to any specific request for change that has not been made.

The revised version should be submitted in triplicate (one single-sided and two double-sided), with a covering letter detailing and numbering your responses to each comment. The revision should be received within 4 weeks from the date of this letter.

To facilitate the processing of your manuscript and to reduce delays, we request that you submit an electronic version of your revised manuscript (both text and art) with the hard copies. Please consult any recent issue of the journal, or visit our website at www.academicpress.com/pm to ensure that you are in compliance with all components of our Information for Authors

Thank you for considering Preventive Medicine; we look forward to seeing your revised manuscript.

Comments from Reviewer I:

This paper used an observation system to estimate physical activity in children during break times in schools.

In the introduction and discussion important publications from Europe are not mentioned: Stratton G, J of Sport Pedagogy 1999; 2: 71-82; Stratton G, Ergonomics 2000; 43, 10: 1538-1546; van Mechelen et al, 2000; 32, 9: 1610-1616 for European boys and girls and Kemper in Int J Sports Med 2000; 21: S118-S124.
Although it is important that the CAST system is reliable and valid, in the methods and results it is too much described and has to be considerable condensed (from almost three pages to only one).
Page 5: delete paragraph of sample size calculation (not relevant for this paper).
Condense pages 6, 7, 9 and 11.
Delete table 2 and 3 (main results about reliability and validity in methods!)

Minor points:
MIGI is not adequate heading
Abstract: line 9: delete "a subset of MVPA"
Line 12, 13 no decimals in percentages
- Page 6, line 2: five (?) viewing areas

How do I respond?

- polite
- numbered comments
- indicate if they are wrong
- express any confusion
- ask clarification
- check other reviewer
- thankful for improvement

Dear Dr. Nixon,

Thank you for accepting our paper *Active school playgrounds – Myth or reality? Results of the Moove it Groove it Project*, PMED2001-0057-R pending minor revision.
We have responded to suggested changes as follows:

Response to reviewer 1:
1. We have included reference to all the suggested articles.

2. We have condensed the methods and results sections. In particular the parts on validity and reliability.

3. The information in Tables 2 and 3 was a vital part of this paper as they detail the multi level analysis results and process. However we have now removed one model, collapsed the two tables into one and done away with one set of footnotes. We have also improved the labeling as recommended by reviewer 2 .

4. We have removed the paragraph on sample size calculation.

5. The suggested "Five viewing areas" is not always correct, so it should stay discrete.

6. We cannot find reference on Line 15 of page 6 to "three teams of five cast observers" and if this is the reviewer's suggestion, it is incorrect. We cannot respond further to this comment.

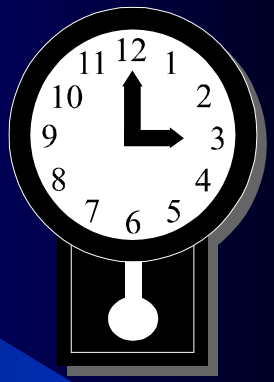
Response to reviewer 2:

1. We have condensed sections on reliability and validity and clarified the results section as described below.

We do appreciate the reviewers comments and feel the paper has benefited from your combined input. We hope it meets your approval.

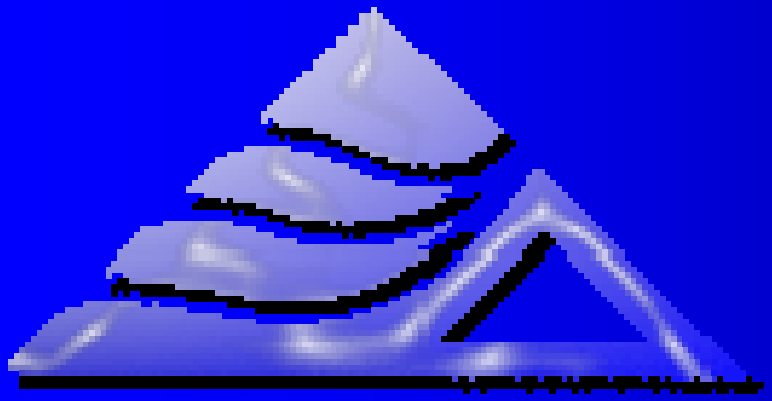
Yours sincerely,

How long does it all take?



- 2 to 3 months to 1st response
- 2 to 3 months to acceptance
- 3 to 6 months to publication

‘Good Luck‘



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Health Promotion Unit
Northern Rivers Area Health Service
Lismore NSW

June 2001

Some helpful rules for better writing

Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.

Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.

And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.

It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.

Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat)

Comparisons are as bad as clichs.

Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.

Be more or less specific.

More helpful rules for better writing

Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.

Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.

No sentence fragments.

Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.

Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.

One should NEVER generalize.

Don't use no double negatives.

More helpful rules for better writing

One-word sentences? Eliminate.

Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.

The passive voice is to be ignored.

Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.

Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.

Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said,
"I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times:
Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it
correctly.