Preparing an article for Academic Medicine

Academic Medicine Staff
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## How do articles differ from research reports?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Research reports</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present and support a thesis:</td>
<td>Present and test a hypothesis or pose a research question:</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>What are you going to tell the reader about or convince the reader of?</em></td>
<td><em>What assumption will you test, or what research question will you answer?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unstructured abstract ≤ 250 words</td>
<td>Structured abstract ≤ 250 words:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organized according to content</td>
<td>Organized with a formal structure:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May or may not include data</td>
<td>Includes quantitative and/or qualitative data</td>
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<tr>
<td>May be based on or express opinions, supported by facts</td>
<td>Must base argument on facts</td>
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Why write an article rather than a research report?

Consider writing a general scholarly or perspective article when:

- You’ve done research, but your data are not the point, or your data may be very preliminary or not robust or central enough to your message.
- Your topic is of broad concern to the wider academic medicine community.
- You wish to describe an innovation or present opinions and ideas.
General scholarly articles may be on topics like these:

- Mergers or starting new schools
- Analyses of current educational, political, financial, or social trends
- Innovations with systemic implications
- Innovative programs
- Medical informatics
- Information and medical technologies
- History of medical education and training
- Humanities in medical education
- The future of an aspect of academic medicine
Writing about innovations

*Academic Medicine* expects that articles describing innovations will:

1. Describe the problem clearly and thoroughly.
2. Include a statement about the degree to which the problem is generalizable.
3. State the key issues of the stakeholders.
4. Delineate the array of potential solutions.
5. Present the details of why a particular solution was selected and/or developed.

(Continues)
Writing about innovations (continued)

6. Describe the implementation of a particular innovative solution.

7. Provide critical analysis of the quality of the innovative solution.

8. Assess of the innovation's potential influence on the field, discipline, or area of study.

9. Include an account of the degree to which the innovation described is a sustained innovation.

Please consult the August 2008 editorial, “Toward Better Descriptions of Innovations,” for more details. Note that not all excellent innovation articles will be able to or should incorporate all nine of the items listed above.
What is a perspective article?

Perspectives allow you to present your opinions and ideas as well-supported, scholarly arguments. These articles may:

- Describe a considered view about an issue in academic medicine
- Propose and support a new hypothesis
- Theorize the implications of programs and innovations that have not been implemented
- Include few, if any, tables and figures
Preparing to write your article

✓ Develop your thesis.
✓ Decide whether you are writing a scholarly article, describing an innovation, or offering your opinions or ideas in a perspective.
✓ Gather information to support your thesis.
✓ Ensure you have received approval or an exemption from your institutional review board if human subjects are involved (see tutorial on ethical issues).
✓ Organize your content.
Writing your article

Introduction
- Provide background information, such as a brief review of the literature.
- State your thesis.

Body
- Each paragraph supports the thesis and builds on the paragraph before it.
- Each paragraph should flow smoothly into the next.

Conclusion
- The conclusion flows naturally and supports the thesis.
- Implications are discussed, future directions for research are proposed, and limitations are addressed, as appropriate.
Questions?

Contact the Academic Medicine editorial office at:

Telephone: (202) 828-0590

E-mail: acadmed_online@aamc.org

Online: www.academicmedicine.org