

Great Clinically-Oriented Articles Are Appearing in Chiropractic Journals -- They are Written by You

WHERE DID WE LEAVE OFF LAST MONTH?

Last month we decided that writing for publication in a chiropractic journal is not the arduous chore some would have you believe (e.g., the ivory-tower types). Actually it is very enjoyable, particularly when you see your name in print. And the prestige ... hmmm. As an author and busy practitioner, I have learned about what contributes to success in writing. Today, I'll finish sharing the tips for fun and success that work for other authors and will work for you too.

You just received a letter from the journal's review committee. Your palms are sweaty. Your heart is tight with anxiety. What did the reviewers say about your hard work? Who are the reviewers anyway? Some weeks or months pass before the results of the review committee are sent out. Generally, manuscripts are reviewed by experts familiar with the subject being discussed. Like you, these experts (at least two or three review each manuscript) usually have busy practices and it takes time for them to set aside other work so that they can carefully review the manuscript.

What Do They Look for?

The reviewers look at the manuscripts clarity of purpose, relevance to the journal's readership, organization, importance, originality, accuracy, timeliness, and readability. If the manuscript includes research material then methodology, thoroughness of a literature review and the significance of the findings are also reviewed. After careful reading, each reviewer makes comments which are designed to improve the manuscript. If the recommendation is to revise the manuscript the author is encouraged to incorporate the revisions wherever possible.

With this information in mind, you open the letter from the editor. There are only two scenarios inside the envelope. Either the article is accepted for publication pending revisions or the article is not accepted for publication.

More likely than not if you followed the tips we discussed so far your manuscript is accepted pending revisions. Good news! Now, all you have to do is study the reviewers comments and wisely incorporate them into the manuscript. Keep in mind, the recommended revisions are sincerely designed to make the manuscript better.

Try not to take the reviewers comments personally. I remember one occasion where a reviewer hinted that I did not know what I was talking about and wanted me to make certain changes. At first I was angry. Later I realized that my discussion of the subject led the reviewer down the wrong track and caused confusion. Naturally, the reviewer concluded that he was right and I was wrong. So, all I had to do was revise the manuscript so that there would be no confusion about what I was trying to say.

If the manuscript is not accepted do not, I repeat, do not lose heart and give up. Study the reasons why the reviewers made their recommendations. Seek assistance in strengthening the manuscript.

Show the results to your colleagues and ask for input and then resubmit the article. Also, think about submitting the article to another journal. More than likely this is the best course of action if the manuscript is not accepted a second time.

Finally, Remember One More Tip

All health care professions thrive or die by their scientific literature or lack thereof. Quite literally, no major health care profession has ever survived in the face of a withering supply of scientific publications. Conversely, history tells us that when there is a healthy supply of scientific writings the profession prospers. So the moral to the story is publish, prosper, and enjoy!

With each article I encourage you to write the questions you may have, commentaries on patient care, or thoughts to share with your colleagues, to me at the following address. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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