

# 10 top tips on how to get published

It's no secret that with the advent of open access, getting your work published has never been a more attractive proposition. The *BDJ* received close to 600 manuscripts in 2014 and is on track to exceed that in 2015. With that in mind and as we head into 2016, we ask Editor-in-Chief **Dr Stephen Hancocks** for his 10 top tips on how to get published.

## 1 You don't necessarily have to write your title first

This one catches out many new authors. They spend forever coming up with a working title and then their work doesn't reflect what they started out with. I would recommend that you leave writing your headline to the end. That way you can reflect on the content and ensure you have something that is engaging and accurate.

## 2 Think about the robots

If your title is short, snappy and something akin to a news headline, that will attract potential readers. However there's another audience you need to bear in mind when writing your title – robots. Not only will very long titles put people off from reading them, chances are it won't appear particularly high if you google the subject. Keywords are an essential part of the title. 'Oral health and elite sport performance' will have more chance of being picked up through a search engine than 'Functionalisation of titanium implants using a modular system for binding and release of VEGF enhances bone implant contact in a rodent model'.

## 3 Think about your intended audience

Choosing where to target your paper can be tricky. Everyone has a different tone, a different way of referencing and a different

way of talking to their audience. Once you have decided where to send your manuscript, scope out the intended journal. How do they reference? Is the style colloquial or formal? Author guidelines have been produced for a reason, and so often people don't take them on board. Use them to help set the template and the feel of your article. It will give you a greater chance of acceptance if your manuscript reads like something that would fit into the journal straight away.

## 5 Get the basics correct

It sounds rather simplistic, but get the basics right. That means names and titles in cover letters. If I get a cover letter addressed to the wrong name with the wrong journal, it doesn't reflect well on the content I'm about to read. More to the point if you haven't addressed it to the correct journal how do I know it is definitely for me?

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## 4 It's in the detail

Research. Clinical. Practical. Education. Opinion. Political. Subject does matter, so think very carefully about which of these 'brackets' you wish to cover. Think about how long it may take to compile the research and analysis. Manuscripts are a potential investment in your future. They can be the difference between getting a potential job or not.

## 6 Take up residence on ethics street

Jimi Hendrix once said 'I've been imitated so well I've heard people copy my mistakes'. The moral of the story? Do not plagiarise, never submit the same paper twice, declare all conflicts of interest and please obtain permission to reproduce another person's figures and/or tables. Articles involving clinical research should

conform to the guidelines issued in the Declaration of Helsinki where applicable, and in general should have ethical committee approval. For further review of the subject see *Br Med J* 1991; **302**: 338-341. ARRIVE reporting guidelines must be followed for primary research manuscripts documenting animal studies (*PLoS Bio* 2010; **8**: e1000412). Reports of clinical trials must conform to the CONSORT statement and reports of systematic reviews of clinical trials must conform to the PRISMA statement.

## 7 Take feedback on board

There are a wide-ranging number of factors that I consider when reviewing manuscripts. If your manuscript is rejected, don't take it personally. Look on it as an opportunity to improve your work and not to get disheartened. Ensure you respond to all comments, and if you don't agree with a comment, explain why. It's not a closed dialogue, and any advice we can give on improving your manuscript should be seen as a positive thing. Seek advice from peers before sending it in too – they will be your toughest critics!

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## 8 Open it up

Open access is a growing element of publishing, and we recognise the value of your work being visible to everyone. That's why we've introduced BDJ Open to the portfolio. Open access can be a fantastic way of attracting more interest in your research. A number of research papers have shown that open access articles are viewed more often than articles that are only available to subscribers, and are cited more often.

## 9 Promotion

If you have followed the above, the chances of having your manuscript accepted are going to be relatively high. In which case, have a plan of how you intend to promote your work. More people have social media accounts than a toothbrush, and they are the most obvious way to promote your work. The social media channels available across the BDJ portfolio will ensure that your research is seen on Twitter and or Facebook by a significant number of people.

## 10 Enjoy the challenge

Devising an original piece of research is far from easy. Enjoy the challenge of making yours unique. If you choose perio as a subject then look very carefully at what has been done before, what you can do differently and why it is different. We have had a number of research items appear in the British Dental Journal that have gone on to national news outlets. That could be you!

