

Webliographical guide for writing in a medical journal

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Objective: To search for the websites available on the World-Wide-Web that contain resources for scientific medical writing including medical writing advices, online biomedical journals, refrence and citation guidelines and biostatistics webpages.

Methodology: Yahoo, Google scholar and Scirus search engines were used by entering the search terms "medical writing resources", "biostatistics" and "citation guidelines" during the period of June 2008 to December 2008.

Results: Many websites were found containing instructions to authors in health sciences.

Conclusion: With the recent advancements in online availability of biomedical resources, Internet may help a lot in putting up a research work into an article form and getting it published. (Rawal Med J 201;40: 107-110).

Key words: Medical writing resources, biostatistics, citation guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

Physicians use of internet to gather medical information has increased in the recent years. A growing number of websites offer resources and tools to assist physicians and scientists in preparing materials for their publications. They are intended to facilitate the publishing careers of physician writers. The purpose of this webliographical guide is to assist the doctors and medical students in writing for a medical journal as it includes the websites containing information regarding medical writing, biostatistics and citation guidelines.

METHODOLOGY

A search of the World Wide Web was carried out

looking for the websites, which may help researchers in putting up their research work and innovative ideas on paper. Yahoo, Google scholar and Scirus search engines were used by entering the search terms "medical writing resources", "biostatistics "and "citation guidelines" during the period of June 2008 to December 2008.

RESULTS

(1) Portals for medical writing advices

Following is a list of websites found which are either solely dedicated to medical writing or contain pages that may help in scientific writing:

Website name	URL	Remarks
Medical College of Ohio's Mulford Library's website	http://mulford.meduohio.edu/instr/	An alphabetical list of links to Web sites that give instructions to authors.
American Medical Writers Association Delaware Valley chapter	http://amwa-dvc.org/	Provides many useful resources for scientific medical writing.
Purdue University's online writing lab	http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/	Many writing advices, referrals to other information, and downloadable handouts.
International committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)	http://www.icmje.org/	Detailed guide to the uniform format required for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals including bibliographic references developed by the NLM published in 1979. ^{xxi}

Website name	URL	Remarks
Council of scientific editors	http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/	Largest professional body of editors, publishers and writers in life sciences.
Medweb@Emory University	http://www.medweb.emory.edu/	Catalogue of biomedical and health sites.
Writerswrite.com	http://www.writerswrite.com/medical/	Resources for medical writers including medical terms search, medical news, medical writing books and other medical writings.
National Library of Medicine	http://gateway.nlm.nih.gov/	Pub med is a database of NLM where millions of research article are present and can be reviewed at any time. ^{xxi}
European Medical Writers Association	http://www.emwa.org/	Training and networking opportunities. It is a great place to pick up the skills needed to broaden your horizons as a medical writer. ^{xxi}
Author AID	http://www.authoraaid.info/	Provides <i>networking, mentoring, resources</i> and <i>training</i> for researchers in developing countries. This website also has a resource library containing power point presentations and pdf file on many informative topics e.g. how to <u>prepare poster and oral presentations, citing references, writing grant proposals and CVs.</u>
CCONSORT(Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials) Statement Website	www.consort-statement.org/	An evidence-based, minimum set of recommendations for reporting randomized controlled trials (RCTs).
STROBE (STrengthening the Reporting of OBservational studies in Epidemiology)	http://www.strobe-statement.org/	The epidemiological studies should follow STROBE guidelines. studies,
Equator Network	http://www.equator-network.org/	Has lists of available reporting guidelines.

(2) Resources for medical journals:

Reading journals is the first step towards writing in a medical journal. Pakmedinet (<http://www.pakmedinet.com>) is the Pakistan's first largest indexed database of medical journals of Pakistan. Pakistan medical journals association website (<http://www.pmja.com>) provides directory of medical journals approved by PMDC. This

website aims at improving the quality and practice of medical journalism and relationship between journalists and medical professionals.

A complete list of international medical journals available online is well beyond the scope of this article but few of them are; FreeMedicalJournals.com for direct access to current issues of 1400 free, full text medical

journals; PubMedCentral.com a National Library of Medicine's free database of full text articles, findarticle.com a search engine for finding articles.

(3) Style guide for bibliography and citing electronic resources

The reference list of a journal submission can provide a fascinating insight into the work ethics, experience and personality of an author. There are several reasons for using citations. One of the most important uses of references is to show the pathway to a discovery that led to a specific research finding

or opinion. References also should be used to validate and confirm hypotheses and statements in the narrative of the manuscript. The reference list should include works that enable a reader to find similar, as well as different, discoveries and opinions. On the whole, the number of citations and the criteria used to select citations are good reflections of scientific rigor, but they also may suggest an author's personal agenda. There are many formats for bibliographical references:

Website name	URL	Remarks
Vancouver style	http://www.lib.murdoch.edu.au/find/citation/vancouver.html	Vancouver Style uses a notational method of referencing when referring to a source of information within the text of a document. In its simplest form, a citation consists of a number in superscript format or enclosed by round brackets.
American psychological Association website	www.apastyle.org	A website (www.apastyle.org) exclusively elaborating APA style.
Duke University Libraries Citing Sources	URL: http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/	This link provides resources for different style formats including APA style, MLA style and Chicago manual of style.
University of Alberta's website	URL: http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/citation/index.cfm	Different types of electronic resources include World Wide Web sites, FTP sites, Synchronous Communications sites (MOOs, MUDs, Chats), Listservs, Newsgroups, E-Mail, Databases, CD-ROMs, diskettes, magnetic tapes and other portable computer databases.
Ohio State University's website	http://www.osu.edu/	It provides the examples of reference styles for a book, book chapter, journal article, dissertation/thesis, conference paper, conference abstract, technical report, electronic article etc.

(4) Learning statistics online

Statistics form an essential part of the medical literature. A basic understanding of statistics is vital

for deciding the right research methods and analyzing results. Some of the useful biostatistics websites are as follows:

Website name	URL	Remarks
statjournals	http://interstat.statjournals.net	One can publish or read about any aspect of statistical research.
British Medical Journal website	www.bmj.com/statbk/	Web version of the introductory statistics textbook for a beginner.
Statistics pages	http://statpages.org/	WebPages that cover almost every aspect of statistics. It also provides links to online statistics books, tutorials, downloadable software and related resources.
Simple Interactive Statistical Analysis (SISA)	www.quantitativeskills.com/sisa	Allows you to do statistical analysis directly on the Internet. All the statistical procedures are given on this website. One has to fill the form and analysis will be performed there and then.
Bibliographic software (Endnote, RefWorks, Zotero)	Zotero is can be downloaded for free from homepage http://www.zotero.org/ . A trial version of Endnote can be downloaded from http://www.endnote.com/endemo.asp . RefWorks can be downloaded from the link http://linux.wareseeker.com/free-refworks-bibliography/ .	Endnote is excellent for organizing citations for papers and theses. Refworks allows users to share citations and is good for organizing citations for papers. Zotero is good for managing a variety of formats, including WebPages and offers most functionality in a free, open-source product.

CONCLUSION

The Internet is rapidly evolving from a resource used primarily by the research community to a true global information network offering a wide range of databases and services. This evolution presents many opportunities for improved access to biomedical information. Nowadays the need for obtaining updated medical information is essential to doctors in practice as well as in research and the Internet, being the most easily accessible and affordable tool for extracting information, should be our first priority for this purpose.

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