Let your work decide the shape of the manuscript

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Abstract
Biomedical research progresses by leaps and bounds and every day, in the lab, witnesses reams of data being added to the already existing database. Researchers or scholars often find themselves at sea deciding the right window of expression for their work and also struggling to find their target audience. With scant opportunities for budding scholars to acquaint themselves to scientific writing and publishing skills, it is the need of the hour to introduce the greenhorns to the outlines of the various categories of scientific writing and what each category of publication entails.

Conclusion
The main motive of a researcher is to disseminate his/her work to the scientific community. A scientific paper debates the raised topics, shares the information gathered, statistically analyses the information and draws the readers’ attention to the most pertinent conclusions. While drafting a scientific manuscript, the researcher should pay attention to quality, lucidity, simplicity, communication and language, which are its salient characteristics. As every paper is different in its content and so is judged by different yardsticks, the researcher should be aware of the type of manuscript he/she is drafting to serve the specific purpose.

The manuscript prepared for submission should be organised in the best possible way to exhibit the author’s research work lucidly. Most of the scientific articles contain subheads arranged as introduction, methods, results, discussion and conclusion (IMRAD), which is a popular structured format, often adhered to. However, there are a few exceptions like case reports and technical innovations that do not fit into the IMRAD format.

A scientific communication can be an original article, review article, case report, case series, letter to the editor, viewpoint, technical report, proceedings, editorial and consensus type of research article. We discuss these pieces of communication in brief.

Original article
These are the original standard scientific articles, often published in peer-reviewed journals. Research articles primarily report on the findings of a researcher or more, often a group of researchers. A research article is a systematic arrangement of scientific data in readable prose. It includes an abstract and the text is arranged in the IMRAD format. The original article, once published, will add further information and knowledge to the particular subject. This pool of knowledge generated by original articles enables budding researchers to extract information about a particular topic. Some might be interested in the methods, a specific result, the interpretation or just a summary of the work done to determine if it is relevant to his/her study. Hence, the primary drafting of the manuscript of an original article should be done carefully.

Review article
It evaluates the research done by others on a specific topic. It is an article designed around certain problems, to know its importance in terms of quality and the meaning of the study done before to arrive at the conclusion of that problem. A review article is not just a summary, but an extract of the results of one’s research, organised around a chosen topic/problem. It provides the evidence of recent progress for a particular point of view in a field. Review article describes the evolution of the point of view through time, pointing out the future perspective.

Overall, a review article is organised information related to a problem defining the present status of the problem, its contradictions, inconsistencies and lacunae in research. It also evaluates the controversies and helps in developing further research questions for future investigators to take up. Review article is also called invited review, when the editor invites a learned scholar in a particular area to write a review about a topic.

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For citation purposes: Kumar V, Saxena A, Chakrabarty M, Ray B. Let your work decide the shape of the manuscript. OA Case Reports 2013 Sep 10;2(9):82.
Case report
Case report is used to report a new experience with a patient having an unusual presentation, laboratory findings which are different from the recommended and accepted values, rare imaging pictures or cases not responding to the standard therapy that have not been previously reported. It can also be on any variation encountered during routine dissection of the body.

It includes a brief introduction, presents the situation and provides a clear description of the situation and the results with an annotated literature review of analogous cases.

Case series
As the name suggests, case series is an eloquently designed study, depicting a series of cases of a particular disease or any incongruity of a disease observed in clinical practice. Case series are described to suggest the best assumption.

Case series may be consecutive or non-consecutive. They may be perplexed by selection bias. They are significant in epidemiology for studying symptoms and signs and creating case definitions. Case series can also be population-based, consisting of a population register of cases such as serious diseases, deaths and health service utilisation. Some authors believe that case series just add up a bulk to the existing information on a particular disease, which can be used in amalgamation to see the effect of intervention with a cross-sectional view and is concerned with frequencies and prevalence.

Technical note
It is a short report of a method, technique, a new procedure or an improvement of the existing one. It is compared with previously employed research techniques showcasing statistically analyzed results. It also discusses the merits and demerits of the new technique, the novelty of concepts involved, the validity of the technique and its potential for clinical applications.

Editorial
Most of the medical journals feature editorial articles. Editorials contribute to the character of a particular journal. It may be written by the editor or some invitees by the editor of that journal. Editorials serve as critiques of the original article published, provide concise review of the topics and draw attention to the recent advancements and developments in the field of science and technology, which the editor feels is important to the readers of the journal and the community to know. An editorial can also be a commentary on non-scientific topics of health policy, economics, law or ethics.

An editorial article raises an issue or poses a question with grounding information. It proposes one or more possible solutions for the posed question/issue with appropriate affirmations supported by citations. The conclusion of the editorial provides answer to the issue/question posed.

Letter to the editor
It is also known as the correspondence section in a journal. It is usually peer-reviewed. It is a form of communication between the journal audiences and the editor. It is an effective way of sharing your opinion and inspiring others to take action. It can be a comment by the reader of the journal, when more information has to be added, when a possible error is discovered in a particular article, when a noteworthy view point has to be shared or it can be a reply from the author justifying/answering to a comment posted by the reader. It is concise, makes one or two simple points or deals with one basic issue, comment, discussion or commentary addressing a significant aspect of previously published articles. The comments should be significant, constructive and relevant. Letters to the editor thus keeps the literature accurate and the authors and editors accountable for the scientific data published.

Proceedings
Proceedings are the collection of papers of works presented at conferences. As conferences showcase the cutting edge of research, particularly in medicine and engineering, researchers present papers on the research they are doing and obtain feedback from the audience. The papers presented in conferences may be oral or in the form of posters. Papers presented in the conference are peer-reviewed and usually published in a volume called conference proceeding, which accounts for primary literature. If it is not peer-reviewed and published, the data goes to grey literature, making it difficult to find. It may be months before such information is published as a journal article or it may never be published at all. Most often, the only record of the presentation will be the brief description (abstract) of the presentation that scientists submit to the conference organisers.

Conclusion
Scientific writing has become an important tool in the research field. Whenever research is done, it should be published in the most appropriate manner. The main motive of a researcher is to disseminate his/her work to the society, other scholars, academicians and students. Inappropriate design of the manuscript may lead to delay in publication or non-publication. Therefore, it becomes essential to know which category your work falls in. Correctly-designed manuscript stands a better chance of being published in a good journal. “Get a shoe of your size or it will bite.”

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