

Biomedical Writing

Materials and Methods

How did you do it?

PRINCIPLES

- Essentials:

Include all essentials of experimental design and procedures

Use headings to guide the reader

In general, move from broad to specific

Identify statistical methods, and software packages

Avoid use of brand names and jargon!

- How much detail to include?

Published method: identify procedure, give reference

Modification of published method: give reference and describe details of modification

New method: need full details

- Your account should be:

Repeatable

Unambiguous

Accurate and complete

Logically presented

Studies involving patients – information to include

Study design

Type of study (e.g. randomized control trial; cohort)
Dates of study, length of follow up

Setting

Type of health care setting (e.g. ambulatory care center of urban hospital, rural private practice)
Geographical location (and / or specific name of health care setting, if appropriate)
Other relevant details

Subjects

Clinical and sociodemographic features
Criteria for inclusion / exclusion
Number of patients: included and excluded, withdrawn or lost to follow up
Statement regarding informed consent

Interventions

Procedures and equipment
Drugs and other agents – source, dosage, method and duration of administration
Safety measures
Handling of treatment complications of adverse side effects
Methods of randomizing or blinding (masking)
Statement of approval by IRB

Main outcome measures

Units of analysis (e.g. eyes, patients)
Method of measurements
Specific definitions of outcomes)

Statistical analysis

Hypothesis to be tested, comparisons to be made
General type of analysis (e.g. multiple regression analysis)
Acceptable level of statistical significance
Computer software (and hardware, if appropriate) used