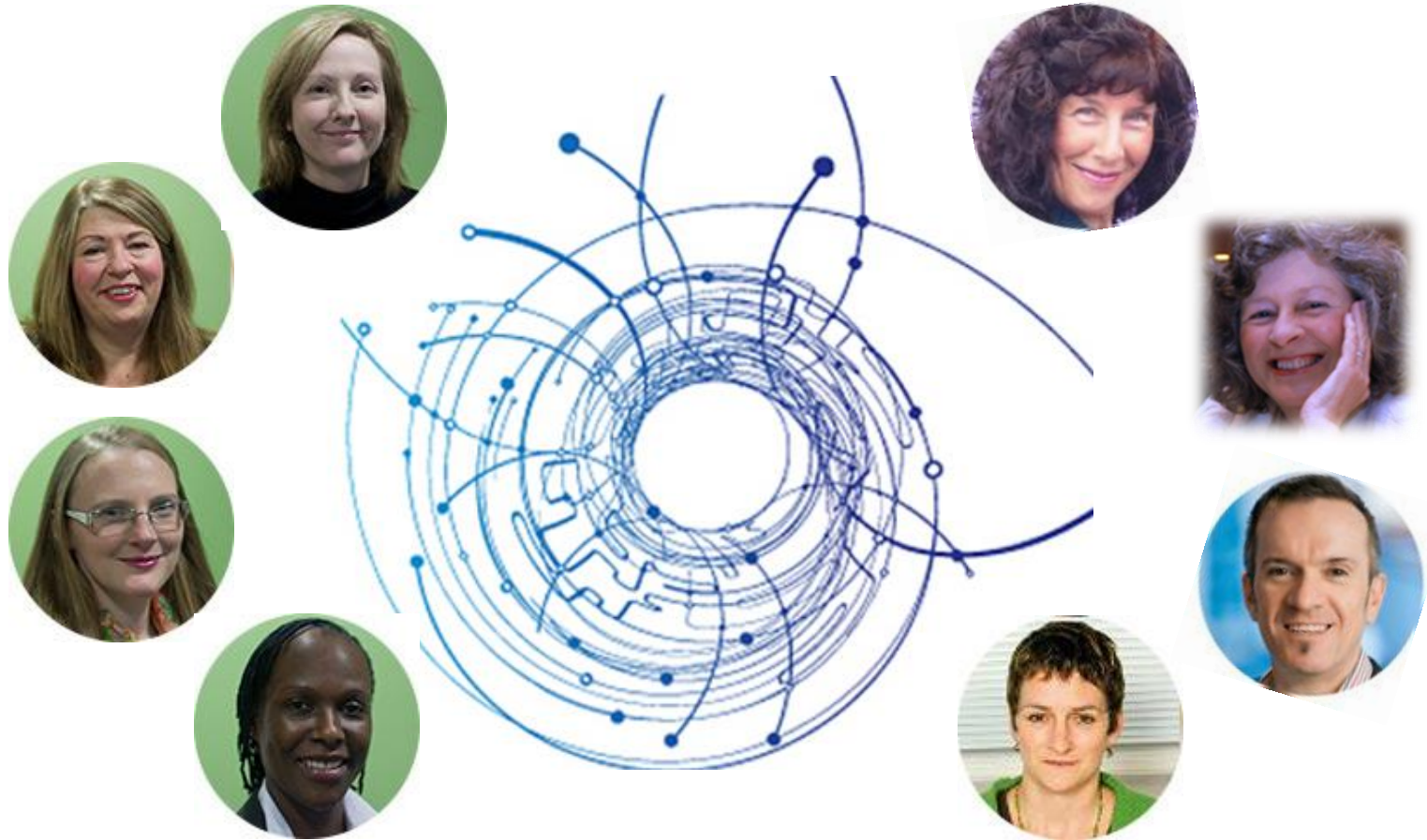


Publishing your work: An editor's perspective.

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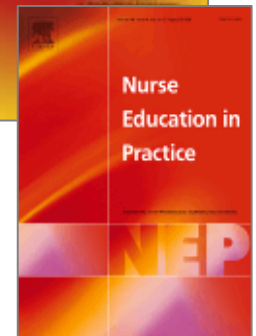
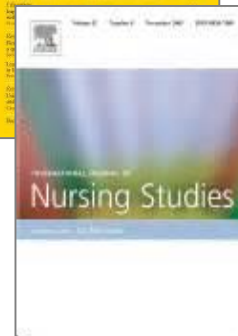
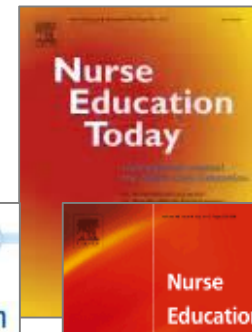
The England Centre for Practice Development



<https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/england-centre-for-practice-development/england-centre-for-practice-development.aspx>

An editor's perspective?

- Editor, European Journal of Cancer Care (Wiley-Blackwell) from September 2008 until January 2013
- Associate Editor, European Journal of Oncology Nursing (Elsevier) from September 2005 until 2008
- Editorial Board Member, European Journal of Oncology Nursing from March 2008 to current date
- Also a reviewer for several other journals.



Why bother with writing?

- Reporting your findings is an essential part of the research process (Robson, 2002)
- Research should always result in praxis (Silverman, 2004)
- Three imperatives for publishing
- *Building the knowledge base* - the academic imperative
- *Publish or perish* - the personal / professional imperative
- *Giving voice to your informants* - the ethical imperative

Who are you writing for?

Start from first basics

- Consider your reason for writing and your target audience (Rosenfeld et al, 2000).
- Write clearly, succinctly and accurately with your intended audience in mind (Fahy, 2008a).
- Make sure you cover all relevant literature in your introduction (Fahy, 2008a, 2008b; Audisio et al, 2008).
- Build a strong, reasoned and well supported argument i.e. start with a central thesis and stick to it (Fahy, 2008b).

What's in a name?

For qualitative studies:

- Variation is normal, but in general, it is better to clearly state the main topic or themes originating from the study, the study question, design and population/setting e.g.

*Faith, Hope and Charity: the origins of the British hospice movement prior to the work of Dame Cicely Saunders:
A narrative literature review.*

Living with uncertainty: the lived experience of women newly diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer: Findings from an hermeneutic phenomenological interview study.

What's in a name?

- Try to avoid long, abstract titles, especially those containing lengthy quotations from the data e.g.

*'It was when he shut the door and left me alone that the enormity of what had just taken place hit me':
An exploratory study of physician's interview skills when breaking bad news.*

- Or those containing obscure or obtuse statements e.g.

Desperation, exasperation and resignation: The ineffable poignancy of false hope for those facing the end of their life .

What is this study about?

‘Desperation, exasperation and resignation: The ineffable poignancy of false hope in those facing the end of their life’.

What is this study about?

- Prisoners on death row?
- Hospice patients?
- Or the attempts of older men to find youth again through a younger partner?
- The problem is that the title tells us very little about the study or whether it will be useful to read.



What's in a name?

- Give careful consideration to the title and try to include:
 - Reference to the population, sample (or theoretical framework for more qualitative work)
 - Reference to the research method(s) used
 - Reference to the intervention where appropriate
 - Reference to a key finding or findings
 - Reference to multidisciplinary, multi-centre or international nature of the study if appropriate.
- Draw out any methodological or analytical innovations in the work and make sure these are included (Aksnes and Rip, 2009).

The art of the abstract

- Clear, transparent and sufficiently detailed abstracts are vital as readers and reviewers often base their assessment of a paper on this alone
- In addition, pre-reviewed screening procedures often include study of the abstract only
- The abstract should contain sufficient information to serve as an accurate record of the study's conduct and findings, and provide optimal information within the constraints of the journal house-style
- A properly constructed abstract helps individuals to quickly assess the importance of a manuscript and aids the retrieval of relevant papers from electronic databases.

The art of the abstract

- The abstract should accurately reflect what is in the paper and should not include information not contained in the article
- Studies comparing the accuracy of abstracts and manuscript content often find claims which are inconsistent with, or missing from the full article
- Conversely, omitting important information could mislead others in their interpretation of the study's findings.

Dutch and Kenyan nurses' experiences of being involved in nursing research: results from an exploratory interview study.

- Read the abstract provided in relation to the above study
- What are the strengths of the abstract?
- Are there any weaknesses?
- What is the relationship of the abstract to the title?
 - Does it provide the information you expected?
- What is the relationship of the abstract to the keywords?
 - Are there obvious similarities?
 - Why do you think that these are important?
- Now undertake the same exercise on your own (or another person's abstract) – what are your conclusions?

Selecting your keywords

- Between four and six key words are usually required
- These should accurately identify the paper's subject, purpose, method and focus
- Use of the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH[®]) thesaurus or Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL) headings (or other indices) are useful e.g.
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/meshhome.html>
- If your keywords are not in this list, they run the chance of being missed by others undertaking literature searches and will not be identified, read (or cited!)

Selecting your keywords

- Make sure that you include reference to the same factors in the abstract using the same words to aid ‘crawling’ by search engine ‘spiders’ or ‘robots’
 - Look at citation indexes to consider which words might be most appropriate e.g. cancer or oncology? Paediatric or children? Male or men’s etc. (target audience)
 - Make these your keywords where possible, and reiterate these in your abstract, introductory paragraph and your conclusion.
 - Consider the appropriateness and cultural relevance of certain spellings e.g. US or UK English?

Selecting your keywords

- Don't be tempted to squeeze these words in too often though as search engine algorithms have failsafe measures to detect deliberate attempts to cheat search engine optimisation programmes
- Once you have established the accessibility of the manuscript to search engine algorithms, use other words featuring highly on the citation list
- Make sure you refer (accurately) to all key authors in the field and expand upon/explain their ideas – good summations of prior work tend to be cited more frequently than original texts over time, so long as they add fresh insight.

How should a quantitative report be written?

- Advice for the authors of quantitative research reports is plentiful – but some good elementary papers include:
 - Audisio et al (2008)
 - Rosenfeldt et al (2000)
 - Mullinger et al (2007)
- as well as most good research textbooks e.g. Silverman (2004).

Writing a qualitative paper

The COREQ Guidelines

- Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., Craig, J. (2007) Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care* 19:349-357.

- Available from:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>

International Journal for Quality in Health Care, Volume 19, Number 6, pp. 349–357
Advance Access Publication: 14 September 2007

10.1093/intqhc/mzm042

Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups

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Abstract

Background. Qualitative research explores complex phenomena encountered by clinicians, health care providers, policy makers and consumers. Although partial checklists are available, no consolidated reporting framework exists for any type of qualitative design.

Objective. To develop a checklist for explicit and comprehensive reporting of qualitative studies (indepth interviews and focus groups).

Methods. We performed a comprehensive search in Cochrane and Campbell Protocols, Medline, CINAHL, systematic reviews of qualitative studies, author or reviewer guidelines of major medical journals and reference lists of relevant publications for existing checklists used to assess qualitative studies. Seventy-six items from 22 checklists were compiled into a comprehensive list. All items were grouped into three domains: (i) research team and reflexivity, (ii) study design and (iii) data analysis and reporting. Duplicate items and those that were ambiguous, too broadly defined and impractical to assess were removed.

Results. Items most frequently included in the checklists related to sampling method, setting for data collection, method of data collection, respondent validation of findings, method of recording data, description of the derivation of themes and inclusion of supporting quotations. We grouped all items into three domains: (i) research team and reflexivity, (ii) study design and (iii) data analysis and reporting.

Conclusions. The criteria included in COREQ, a 32-item checklist, can help researchers to report important aspects of the research team, study methods, context of the study, findings, analysis and interpretations.

Keywords: focus groups, interviews, qualitative research, research design

Communicate the context

- An important first consideration in a case-study report on a particular hospital or health care system – a university even.
 - e.g. explanation of the background, history, philosophy, personalities, cultures and political scenario on the study location may provide a good rationale / explanation for the case study or analysis (Silverman, 2004)
 - This may be followed with a detailed account of any theoretical frameworks which have been used to inform the study (i.e. establishing an audit trail)
 - Data may then be discussed in relation to various aspects of the framework – or the data categories themselves.

Guidelines for qualitative report writing

- the report should tell us what the study was about
- it should communicate a clear sense of the social and historical context in which data were collected
- it should provide a 'natural history of the inquiry' (i.e. a clear audit trail of what was done, by whom, to whom, how, and why)
- we should see why key concepts emerged from the coding and how these relate to existing theory
- well chosen data should be used to warrant the arguments and conclusions being posited
- broad conclusions should be articulated and their importance to other settings or worlds of experience discussed

(after Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Additional advice from Silverman (2004)

- Qualitative data presentation and discussion may be written as one chapter in qualitative research
 - introduce the main themes or categories derived from the data and discuss these one by one or, if using a theoretical framework, in relation to this
 - the section should proffer a convincing account of the phenomena you have found in the data. This section may be quite descriptive, or might be more analytical.
 - summarise the section by saying what has been achieved, what the data suggest and any surprising results encountered with possible explanations.

Additional advice from Silverman (2004)

- Conclusions and hypotheses: need to demonstrate the work's broader utility (i.e. transferability)
 - what did you learn from the conduct of the study?
 - how far have your questions been answered?
 - were the results anticipated – are there any surprises?
 - how far are your findings supported by other literature or explained by means of your theoretical framework?
 - how does what you have found contribute to the body of knowledge in this area?
 - to what extent might it be transferable?
 - can you apply findings to current practice / policy?
 - what research should follow on from the study

Ways to succeed when writing your report

- Establish a writing schedule and set a completion date
- Write down what you want your paper to achieve
- Consider how your paper can create interest
- Make sure you use the acceptable format
- Make sure your paper is current
- Make the paper easily navigable
- Stay focused – don't drift!
- Make your point clear
- Conclude logically
- Proof read!

Submitting the manuscript

- Make sure that the article is correctly formatted e.g. title page, contributor details, tables, double spacing etc.
- Make sure that you are using the correct referencing system (easier with EndNote, Reference Manager etc.)
- If writing in an English language journal, make sure that you know which kind of English you should be using
- Set the spell checker accordingly - but do not rely on this as the sole means of checking your spelling.

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- Set the spell checker accordingly - but do not rely on this as the sole means of checking your spelling - **what common cancers are these?**



Submitting the manuscript

- Make sure that every citation in the paper is listed in your reference list – and that these are correctly cited!
- Do not use acronyms (e.g. DOH, NHS, ZonMW) without explaining what they are – remember your audience!
- Try not to use abbreviations – but where permitted, use them sparingly and with great care
- Check spelling and grammar (then check it again!)
- Make sure that all tables, photographs, figures etc. are present and properly labelled – consider how they will look in the journal!
- Check that you are not breaching copyright for any illustration and obtain permission if necessary.

Submitting the manuscript

- Take your time!
- Put the manuscript in a draw for a week while you ask a trusted critical friend to review it for you.
- Proof read the article again once you have amended it and ask someone else to do this as well (preferably a native speaker)
- Write your submission letter with as much care and attention as the manuscript, and make sure that you 'sell' the paper to the editor as an appropriate one for publication.
- Cite current policy, scientific or clinical developments which support its publication (but do not argue that the study is unique – it is probably not!)

Submitting the manuscript

- Send or upload your article exactly as requested in the *Guidelines for Authors* or *Notes for Contributors* and then be patient!
- Expect disappointment
- Almost no article gets accepted on first submission. You will have to make amendments if the paper is accepted!
- Attend to all of the comments made by the Editor or reviewers and go through all of the aforementioned quality checks before resubmitting the article. It is not unusual for new errors to be introduced at this stage!
- Sometimes a second or third review of the manuscript will be requested.... but do not fire off angry emails to the Editor saying that you have already corrected the script once!

Common reasons for refusal

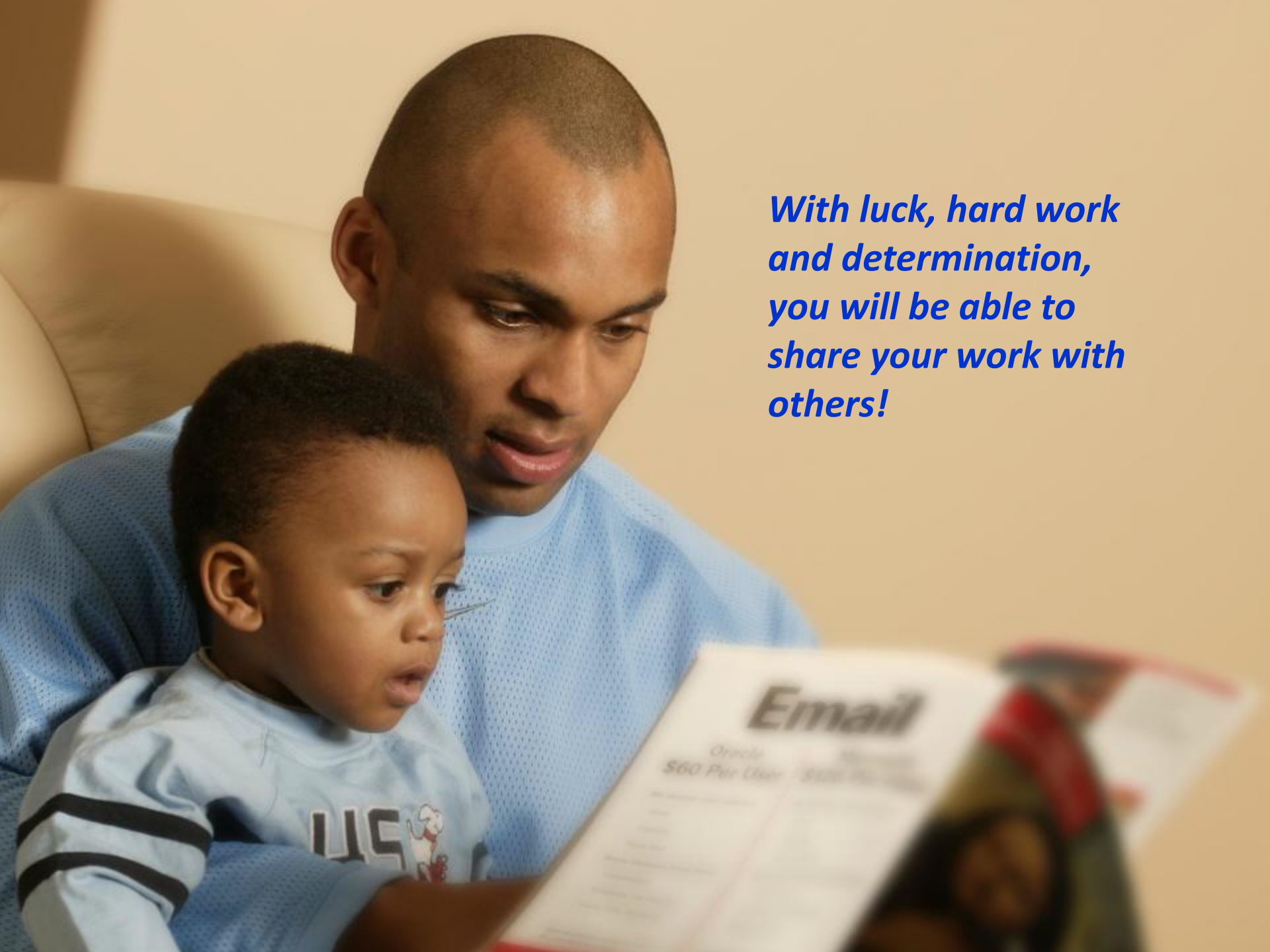
- The article is not ready!
- Poor English (which may also mean American English!)
- The article is too parochial (lacks broad appeal)
- The article is poorly or carelessly prepared
- The article is too short or too long
- The article is not relevant to the journal's readership
- The article is too dated
- The article contains nothing new or original
- The article lacks methodological or theoretical rigour

Common reasons for refusal

- The article may cover topics which have already been adequately addressed by the journal (including any articles in press)
 - The article includes material which you have already published elsewhere (duplicate publication)
 - The article reports data which has already been the subject of other thematic papers (salami slicing)
 - Sufficient numbers of papers from your country have already been published recently (representativeness)
 - The article may genuinely belong in an alternative journal (the content is too specialist)
- but this does not mean that the article is no good!

Remember...

- Journals may receive five, six - or even more times the number of manuscripts that they can possibly publish in an acceptable time-scale
- Publishing houses are commercial businesses – they exist to make a profit for their owners or shareholders and are not (necessarily) interested in the publication of your particular study (though the editor should be!)
- Building market share, maintaining an impact factor and improving sales are often what count
- Editors cannot entirely ignore these factors (and keep their posts) but...



*With luck, hard work
and determination,
you will be able to
share your work with
others!*

Danke schön!



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