When carrying out a research study you need to think carefully about your publishing strategy. It is best to start planning this when you first begin the research in order to avoid misunderstandings as the work progresses to publication stage such as who will be listed as authors on published articles and where to submit them.

Who will be the authors of the paper?
This is not always as obvious as it may seem at first sight. There is a great deal of pressure on researchers to gain as many high quality 'outputs' as possible, but a number of 'cautions' are needed. Only people who have contributed to writing the paper should be named as authors. These are likely to be all those who have made a substantial contribution to the work. All those named as authors must read and check the final version, and some journals will require signed consent from all authors as evidence that they have played appropriate roles in the work. Agreeing authorship at the start of a project avoids embarrassment at the later stages. Normally, the person who has played the major role in research design, data generation and analysis, and writing the paper will be the first named author. Research teams may divide up the publications so that each member has one for which they are the first name. Publications resulting from student projects should have the student as the first named author, and the supervisor(s) afterwards if they have made a major contribution both to the work and to the paper. Others who have played a part in the study, but in a more minor way, could be mentioned in the 'Acknowledgements'. This includes, for example, managers who have granted research access, or patients/clients who have provided data in the case of empirical studies. Some journals have an 'author contribution form' asking for
• the names of all authors and details of the contribution each made to the work described in the paper
• details of any funding
• details of any acknowledgements
• a statement indicating whether ethical approval was granted for the study described
For more discussion of 'authorship', see http://www.icmje.org/.

Which journal(s) to publish in?
If you want to reach clinical staff who give direct care, then you need to choose a journal that is attractive to and read regularly by this kind of readership. Articles published in this kind of journal will be written in the kind of style that appeals to them and contains the right amount of detail. They are likely to be shorter, use straightforward language, and include easy-to-read features such as boxes and lists of bullet points. The implications of the article for clinical practice will be clearly stated. These journals may also include commentaries on articles to help readers to understand and critique them.

If your intended readers are researchers, then a more specialised 'academic' journal may be
appropriate. Some of these journals accept longer articles up to 5000 words long, and they are structured in a conventional format for research reports. However, more 'popular' journals also publish research reports, perhaps in a simpler format designed to be reader-friendly for clinical staff and less experienced researchers.

It is important to be clear about your target readers at the outset. Many people make the mistake of writing their article and then looking around to see which journal to send it to. This can mean that time is wasted having to 'readjust' the article to fit the journal's requirements.

**How many papers can be published from a research study?**

This raises the thorny question of 'salami slicing' – the term used when the same study or data are used across more than one paper so that the resulting papers are thin on original findings. Decisions do need to be made on how to 'slice up' a research project for publication. It is important to be aware of the danger of trying to publish small sections of a study in several separate papers, simply with the objective of collecting publications rather than with addressing in depth different aspects of the same study, or reporting that study in different ways for different kinds of reader. This 'salami slicing' can lead to misrepresentation, for example by decontextualising the findings or losing the benefits of using triangulation in the research being reported.

Now that papers are published online, this is much easier to detect. Authors must be honest and act with integrity because editors and reviewers cannot be aware of everything that is published. All manuscripts are considered by editors on the understanding that they have not been published previously in print or electronic format nor are under consideration by another publication or medium.

If you do not point out possible duplications or other potential problems to the journal editor, your reputation will be damaged and the paper may not be published.

If in doubt, it is best to contact the journal editor for advice before starting to write your article. (See page 00 for more information about copyright issues).

**What to think about if you are writing more than one paper**

Each paper resulting from a single study should normally 'stand alone' and be understandable without reference to other papers from the same study. 'Cutting and pasting' from one paper to another is not acceptable and breaks copyright rules – this would be plagiarising yourself!

**Solutions to these problems include:**

- Publishing a literature review article and a separate report of the empirical aspects of the study.
- When describing the study methods, summarising these in a second paper and referring to a detailed explanation in a previously-published paper.
- Some journals accept two-part papers – check this on their websites

**What you must not do:**

- Do not submit the same or a slightly altered version to two or more journals
- Do not use 'cut and paste' facilities on your word processor to transfer material from one paper to another.
- Do not use the same data quotes in more than one paper.

**Structuring the paper**

Consult your chosen journal's website to see if there is a preferred structure or format for headings and subheadings. If these are not specified, the general guide below may help in constructing your paper. These are the Journal of Advanced Nursing guidelines for empirical research papers and can also be found at [www.journalofadvancednursing.com](http://www.journalofadvancednursing.com).

**INTRODUCTION**
Rationale and context of the study

**BACKGROUND**
This should be a substantial, critical literature review
Should end with conclusions drawn from the review for the study

**THE STUDY**
Aim/s
Include research objectives/questions/hypothesis(es) if appropriate

**Design or Methodology**
For quantitative studies this should be, for example, survey, randomised controlled trial, quasi-experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional, etc
For qualitative study this should be, for example, grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, etc

**Sample/Participants**
Type – random, stratified, convenience, purposive (state what purpose), etc
Size
Description
Justification for the above
Was a power calculation done, if appropriate, and if not, why not?
Response rate

**Data collection**
Use subheadings for different types if appropriate, e.g. questionnaires, interviews, observation
Pilot study – if done, what changes (if any) did this lead to for the main study?

**Validity and reliability/Rigour as appropriate**
Statement of criteria used – should be appropriate to the design/methodology
Steps taken to ensure this - if audit trail, research journal, peer assessment, etc, mentioned then give the results of this – do not just mention that it was done

**Ethical considerations**
Ethics committee approval
Information and guarantees given to participants
Any special considerations, and how dealt with

**Data analysis**
Including software used, if appropriate

**RESULTS/FINDINGS**
Start with description of actual sample studied
Use subheadings as appropriate
For qualitative research – findings and discussion/literature may be integrated

**DISCUSSION**
Start with the study limitations
Link the study findings to the literature

**CONCLUSIONS**
Real conclusions, not just a summary/repetition of the findings
Recommendations for practice/research/education/management as appropriate, and consistent with the limitations
PRESENTATION OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Here are some tips to help you with designing tables and figures for your article.

All tables and figures

• Simple and easy to follow tables and figures are best. Too much 'clutter' gets in the way of understanding your main message.
• Check the journal guidelines
  o Is there a limit on the number of tables or figures you can use?
  o Does the journal use colour, or black and white?
  o What guidelines should be followed when producing electronic artwork?
• Place the tables and figures at the end of the article. Do not put them within the text – they will be placed appropriately when the printers draw up the proofs.
• Refer to all tables and figures in the text, for example – 'See Table 1,' Figure 2 shows that…'
• In the text of the article, pick out the highlights or main points that the table/figure is telling your readers.
• Number tables and figures in separate sequences, e.g. Table 1, 2, etc, Figure 1, 2, etc.
• Give each table/figure a concise heading that summarises its content.
• Try to avoid abbreviations. But if they are essential, give them in full in a footnote to the table, even if you have already explained them in the text.
• Each separate table/figure should 'stand alone', i.e. should be understandable without having to refer back to the text
• Give the number of cases/sample size to which the table/figure refers - N=XX
• Do not put a 'box' around tables and figures.

For tables

• Make sure that numbers, especially if they have decimal points, line up properly – using right justification for these columns is the easiest way to do this.
• Round numbers to 2 decimal places, except for statistical significance levels.
• If you are indicating that some numbers represent statistically significant differences, give the test used and statistical significance level – preferably in columns of the table rather than footnotes.
• Give column and row totals where appropriate.
• Avoid 'busyness' - do not use lines to separate columns.
• Only use lines to separate rows if the rows deal with different types of variable, e.g. age, income, nursing qualification.

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