

## TIPS FOR AUTHORS

# Writing the Introduction to a *JOPR* Research Report

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Many authors have trouble writing the Introduction to a research report. They know it's important, but the right words may not come easily. Here are some hints that may help.

Recognize that your Introduction serves three important functions. Attention to each will help you establish the rationale for the research you will describe.

*Function 1:* As you write, first locate your topic in the broad spectrum of prosthodontics. Let's say your research relates to implants. You might begin by briefly discussing the fact that the placement of implants has become central to the practice of prosthodontics. Then note that a particular implant design has recently been receiving increased attention. This documents the relevance of your report, and alerts the reader to the focus of your work.

*Function 2:* Next, you will review the existing literature on the particular implant design, briefly describing the published reports that provide the background for your work. As you write, move your discussion toward a focus on the knowledge deficit that your research addresses.

*Function 3:* Finally, state specifically the clinically relevant question or issue that remains to be explored. Here you will give the reader two "hooks" on which to hang his or her understanding: (1) What question remains unanswered?, and (2) how will the answer to that question be clinically useful? In

other words, describe the information that previous research has not illuminated and then state why such information will be of particular value in improving the treatment of patients.

Keep in mind that although research reports in the *JOPR* are divided into clinical and basic science sections, in a broad sense, all prosthodontic research is clinical. Even if the research is performed entirely in the laboratory, the goal will probably be to improve patient care. So, in describing why an answer to your question will be useful, almost inevitably you will relate that answer to the clinical setting.

And don't forget that the first readers of your report will be the *JOPR* reviewers. This is a crucial audience. A carefully crafted Introduction tells them that the report has substance, that it is grounded in the relevant published literature, and that the author has the necessary communication skills to describe the work and relate it to the literature and practice of prosthodontics. In other words, that the report is worthy of review.

First impressions are important, so compose your Introduction with appropriate care.

This caveat should not discourage researchers for whom English is a second language—the editorial staff of the journal is prepared to provide some language assistance to researchers when the topic appears to be relevant and that relevance is adequately described.

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