

## TIPS FOR AUTHORS

# Choosing the Most Effective Keywords for Your Manuscript

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doi: 10.1111/j.1532-849X.2009.00487.x

As you put the final touches on your manuscript for submission to the *Journal of Prosthodontics*, selecting keywords will probably be the last task you perform. Carrying out this task should not take long, but it makes sense to give it some thought. This is also the time to take a last look at your title and ask yourself if it is fully descriptive of your report.

## Keywords

Think of your set of keywords as a very abbreviated abstract. They serve as an alert to the reader who has an interest in the topic your report will discuss. Leafing through an issue of the journal, a particular keyword may lead the reader to pause and read the abstract or mark the page for future reference. To be effective in serving this function, the keywords must accurately and precisely reflect the central topic of the report in widely recognized vocabulary terms. Such terms may be general or specific or both. It is unnecessary to reuse words included in your title.

The venerable *Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms* can be an invaluable source for such terms. The *Glossary*, which originated in the 1950s, is revised approximately every 5 years. The revising committee represents more than 30 prosthodontic organizations, many of them from the United States, including the American College of Prosthodontists (ACP), but also from other countries, including Brazil, India, Japan, Korea, Turkey, and many European countries. Thus, although it is in English, the *Glossary* is truly an international project. The most recent version, the seventh edition, can be found in the *Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry* (July 2005; volume 94, issue 1, pp. 10–92) or online at <http://www.prosdent.org/> (see the gray column on the left edge of the screen, click on *Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms*). A quick review of the *Glossary* can help authors choose keywords from among the most precise and widely recognized prosthodontic terms.

## Indexing

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) indexers have their own vocabulary (Medical Subject Headings or MeSH), but as they read the entire article before indexing, your keywords may help alert them to the central or special topics of your report as they select terms for MEDLINE, the premier index to the world's health sciences literature. Although those indexers will use only words from the MEDLINE vocabulary, your keywords can suggest a focus direction.

## Selecting an effective title

The author can also make a direct contribution to facilitating retrieval of the report by how the title is framed. Including words in the title that reflect unique or special techniques or materials will allow MEDLINE searchers to find your report using “text word” searching. In a text word search, the term need not be in the MeSH vocabulary. Obviously, searching on the word “denture” would be inefficient. On the other hand, a text word search on the term *Epitex system abutment* brought up (along with 449 other reports) citation of an article from the April 2008 issue of the *JOPR* titled “Modified Hygienic Epitex System Abutment for Magnetic Retention of Orbital Prostheses.” Four hundred and forty-nine may sound like a daunting number, but relevant reports can be sifted out by strategies such as limiting the results to specific journal titles or years of publication. A librarian familiar with MEDLINE can help with this task.

## Conclusion

The bottom line is that the title and keywords you select for your report make an important contribution to its reader accessibility—so take a few extra moments to make a thoughtful selection.

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