Getting Clinical Research Published
(mostly) a writer’s perspective

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Writing is storytelling
(even scientific writing)
Write for your readers

• Who’s the audience? (readers, reviewers)

• Read the literature critically

• Take every chance to be a reviewer
Choosing a journal

• Be realistic re: novelty / importance of the paper
• But don’t be afraid to take shots on goal (the worst they can say is no)
• Don’t take rejection personally
• Prostate cancer offers many homes (general medicine, oncology, urology, translational science, basic science, health policy, epidemiology)
Figures

• A picture is worth (at least) 100 words — so don’t repeat the words
• Figures need to look professional
• Don’t make a graph for what can be said in a sentence
• Use the right graph
• Don’t rely on Excel to format for you
• KM plots need to include censorship info
Tables

• Should be parsimonious
• Follow journal standards re: rule lines (as much as possible)

• Choose table vs. graph carefully
Results and Methods

• Know your audience (especially in terms of basic vs. clinical science)
• Methods and results should be parallel
• Statistics needs to be solid
• Avoid (or address explicitly) red flags like outdated datasets, non-randomly selected cases
Discussion

• *Briefly* summarize the results and why they are important
• What is new and noteworthy? What was surprising? Why should this paper be published?
• Put findings in context—but don’t write a mini-review
• Write limitations from a reviewer’s perspective
• How will this change clinical practice / research, and what’s the next step?
• Don’t feel compelled to fill the word count
Introduction

• Be brief (1 page / 2-3 paragraphs maximum)
• Provide just enough context for your reader
• What is known, what is the knowledge gap that this paper seeks to fill, and why should we care?
• Do not include a full discussion / literature review
• Finish with a clear hypothesis statement
To state the obvious...

- Proofread
- Make sure all authors are on the same page
- If English is not your first language, ask for help or hire a proofreader
- Follow the journal style sheet
- Always keep the reviewers in mind
- Take revision seriously

- Have fun!