

Jeannette Guarner's rules to write a manuscript

Obviously you have to have results of an experiment, survey (very pertinent for your group), case series, or case. You likely have done a literature search although I always find myself needing other articles as I go along.

1. Put SMALL GOALS for each day. Say you decide to start with the abstract, you make a goal of writing the background and methods today, tomorrow you write the results and the next day the conclusions. (abstract took you to write 3 days).
2. Do not read what you wrote the first or second day, just write the part that you are scheduled to do. If I start correcting I find myself correcting the things I have previously written and then do not write anything new. So DO NOT LOOK BACK.
3. Particularly for the abstract you may want the next 2 days to be CORRECTION days, look at the abstract and correct what you think is necessary. LEAVE THE ABSTRACT ALONE, DO NOT LOOK BACK.
4. Repeat the same process for the rest of the manuscript: Introduction, write a paragraph each day and do not look back. Keep on going for the entire manuscript... DO NOT LOOK BACK AFTER ANY OF THE PARTS!! Again, I find that if I reread say the introduction, I start correcting and I can spend a whole year correcting the introduction... And, I can tell you, the goal is to have a manuscript not a perfect introduction.
5. Once you are finished with the entire manuscript, CORRECT any part you need to correct. This process may take a week or so and you can also do it in stages, one day the intro, another the methods...
6. Let the manuscript sit for 2 -3 weeks in a drawer that is closed so you do not look at it, after those 3 weeks look at it again and CORRECT as you see pertinent.
7. I do not format the manuscript for a particular journal until I have corrected it at least once.

Jeannette