



## Regretful Resolution: Manuscript Rejection and Pathways Forward

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Research is integral to the practice of dentistry. It empowers dental professionals to provide high-quality, evidence-based care, fosters innovation and drives the advancement of medical knowledge for the betterment of patient outcomes and healthcare practices. The necessity of research component in dental education has also been emphasized by Dr. Peter J. Polverini – an eminent professor and a dentist with distinguished scientific career in the field of vascular biology at Michigan University, United States. According to his point of view, research permits dental undergraduates to develop a profound understanding of the biosocial foundations of the profession. Findings of a study on research talent among the dentists underpin Polyverini's point of view. The study reveals that competitiveness of dental scientists is on decline [1]. The 2020 American Dental Education Association survey on senior dental students discloses that 85% of graduating dentists prefer to select practicing dentistry rather than pursuing career in research [2]. A scoping review on this issue concludes that the most dental graduates are well equipped with clinical skills but possess poor research aptitudes due to lack of emphasis on research education and suggests to incorporate it in their curriculum<sup>3</sup> at undergraduate level.

The dentists or dental students who participate in a research study, contribute to the global body of scientific knowledge through presenting their obtained data in a structured writing format known as a manuscript. Once the manuscript is complete, they like their work published in a professional journal but a manuscript undergoes a stern peer review process before being accepted for publication. At this stage, rejection is not an uncommon occurrence<sup>4</sup> and rejection rate is higher in quality indexed journals [5]. Some common reasons for rejection are described to assist the researchers prepare their manuscripts accordingly to avoid rejection.

### Writing quality

Manuscripts with poor writing quality, lack of clarity or disorganized structure may be rejected. It is important to present ideas coherently, use appropriate scientific terminology, and adhere to the journal's formatting and style guidelines. Pay close attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and overall writing quality. Eliminate

nate typographical errors and inconsistencies. Consider professional editing or proofreading services if necessary.

Write your manuscript with clarity, using concise and well-structured sentences. Clearly articulate your research questions, methods, results, and conclusions. Use headings and subheadings to enhance readability and flow.

### Abstract

Most of the journals require a structured summary of 200-300 words with an objective to attract the interested reader towards the full text of publication. It should clearly mention the scope, material method, briefly described results, conclusion and keywords. It is preferable to use Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) Keywords. They are a controlled vocabulary of terms created by the National Library of Medicine and used for MEDLINE (PubMed) article records. A vividly written insightful abstract creates more interest and increases the readership and citation of the published article [6]. Failure to abide by the restriction may lead to rejection.

### Study Background and Rationale

If the manuscript does not adequately review relevant literature or fails to position the research in the context of existing knowledge, it may be deemed insufficiently informed or lacking in scholarly rigor [7]. The rationale of the research will remain obscure and unexplained. Do make sure that your research is robust, well-designed, and addresses a significant gap in knowledge. Thoroughly review existing literature to provide a comprehensive background and highlight the novelty and relevance of your work.

### Study design or methodology

It is the most important part of the research and if the study design is flawed, the methodology is inadequate, or the statistical analysis is inappropriate, the manuscript may be rejected. Scientific research should be rigorous and adhere to established standards and the way in which the study was performed should always be clearly and neatly detailed in this section [8].

### Data and sample size

The manuscript may be rejected if the data presented are insufficient to draw meaningful conclusions or if the sample size is too

small to provide statistically significant results. Individuals participating in the study or elements that make up the sample with inclusion/exclusion criteria should be distinctly mentioned. Sampling strategies and techniques and statistical validity and accuracy of the sample (confidence, margin of error, etc.) need description in detail.

### Results

This section presents the attained findings in a logical sequence without bias or interpretation from the author, setting up the reader for later interpretation and evaluation under the heading of discussion of the text. If the manuscript presents incomplete or inconsistent results, or if there are discrepancies between the data and the conclusions drawn, it will be rejected. The results findings must be mentioned in the past tense.

### Ethical Issues

Manuscripts that raise ethical concerns, such as research misconduct, plagiarism or inadequate protection of human or animal subjects are likely to be rejected. Ensure your research adheres to ethical guidelines, including obtaining necessary approvals for studies involving human subjects or animal research. Address potential conflicts of interest and provide appropriate acknowledgments.

### Impact or relevance of the study

If the research does not have broad implications or lacks relevance to the field, it may be deemed less suitable for publication in a reputable journal.

### Discussion

The manuscript should provide a clear and thorough discussion of the results, interpreting them in the context of the research question and previous studies done nationally and internationally [9]. Your findings may match the other such studies and contradict the others. Cite the studies which have similar findings but do try to find out and mention the reason/s for contradicting findings in other studies. It underpins your study and gives its deeper perception. If the written discussion is weak or lacks depth, it may lead to rejection.

### Journal's guidelines

Each journal has its own requirements and scope. If the manuscript does not align with the journal's focus, scope, or formatting guidelines, it may be rejected without being sent for peer review. Familiarize yourself with the submission guidelines of the journal you're targeting. Adhere to the formatting, word count, and citation style requirements. Following the guidelines demonstrates professionalism and increases chances of your manuscript acceptance.

Select the right journal for sending your manuscript for publishing that aligns with the scope and focus of your research. Read re-

cent articles published in the journal proceedings to gauge if your work fits within their area of interest. In case, your manuscript receives feedback or revision requests from reviewers, carefully address each comment. Revise your manuscript thoughtfully, providing detailed responses and explanations for changes made.

### Referencing and citation

Many manuscripts sent for publishing are rejected due to inadequate or unacceptable referencing and citation style. There are two main types of referencing and citation style. Many journals follow Harvard referencing style while others follow Vancouver's style. Your citation must be in accordance with journal's prescribed method.

The peer review process is designed to improve the quality of scientific research. Though it may be disheartening to receive rejection, it can provide valuable insights and help you refine your work. If your manuscript is rejected, don't be discouraged. Review the feedback, make necessary improvements, and consider submitting to another appropriate journal.

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