

# MMWR Writing Training

# MMWR Writing Training

“Writing” training

vs

“Publishing” training

**Before you start writing:  
Make sure your topic will help fill  
a gap in the literature**

# How to determine whether your topic helps fill a gap in the literature

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- Literature review

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- Literature review
  - Pubmed

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- Literature review
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# How to determine whether your topic helps fill a gap in the literature

- **Literature review**
  - Pubmed
  - Google Scholar
  - other search engines

**“You don't write because you want to say something, you write because you have something to say.”**

**— F. Scott Fitzgerald**

# the public health version

You don't write because you want to publish something, you write because you have learned something that **helps fill a gap in the literature.**

**or. . .**

**You don't write because you want to publish something, you write because you have learned something that is **new** and will be **useful** to people who read your report.**

**How to determine whether your  
topic contributes something  
new and useful**

# How to determine whether your topic contributes something **new and useful**

- Literature review

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- **Literature review**
  - Pubmed
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# How to determine whether your topic contributes something **new and useful**

- Literature review
  - Pubmed
  - Google Scholar
  - Other search engines
- **contact SMEs**

# British Medical Journal

**What they look for:**

# British Medical Journal

What they look for:

- Is it new?

# British Medical Journal

What they look for:

- Is it new?
- Is it true?

# British Medical Journal

What they look for:

- Is it new?
- Is it true?
- Do we care?

- **To determine whether your topic will help fill a gap in the literature, it is best to rely on the literature rather than SMEs?**
- **True**
- **False**
  
- **[correct answer: F)**

**Is it new?**

# Is it new?

- **Literature review**

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- **Literature review**
  - **Pubmed**
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**Is it true?**

# Is it true?

- Data source

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- **Definitions**

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- **Study Design**

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- **Study Design**
- **Statistical methods**

# Is it true?

- **Data source**

**e.g.:**

**validity of the data**

# Is it true?

- **Definitions**

**e.g.:**

**“Among persons living in municipalities heavily impacted by hurricane Sandy. . .”**

# Is it true?

- **Definitions**

**e.g.:**

**“Among persons living in municipalities heavily impacted by hurricane Sandy. . .”**

**But the study used BRFSS data, so it can report only on adults, not “persons”**

# Is it true?

- **Study Design**

**e.g.:**

**“The . . . Department of Public Health investigated an increase in fentanyl-positive drug-associated illnesses reported . . .”**

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**“We performed a case-control study. . . “**

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**“We performed a case-control study. . .”**

# Is it true?

- **Statistical Methods**

e.g.:

“Because currently available screening tests for latent TB infection (LTBI) have poor sensitivity in populations with low prevalence of LTBI, national guidelines recommend testing persons at increased risk for progression from infection to TB disease.”

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just one **problem**. . .

# Is it true?

- **Statistical Methods**

e.g.:

“Because currently available screening tests for latent TB infection (LTBI) have poor sensitivity in populations with low prevalence of LTBI, national guidelines recommend testing persons at increased risk for progression from infection to TB disease.”

just one **problem**. . .

The sensitivity of a screening test is constant regardless of the prevalence of the condition.

**Characteristics of an article that increase the chances of it being accepted by a journal include:**

- a) The information is new**
- b) The data used in the study have a high validity**
- c) The editor thinks the information will be useful to the journal's readers**
- d) All of the above**

**Correct answer: d**

**Do we care?**

# Do we care?

- Who are “we”?

# Do we care?

- **Who are “we”?**
- **“We” are the people who read the journal.**  
“MMWR Weekly publishes information useful to readers in the public health community, private clinicians, researchers, teachers and students, and the news media.”

# Do we care?

- **Who are “we”?**
- **“We” are the people who read the journal.**  
“MMWR Weekly publishes information useful to readers in the public health community, private clinicians, researchers, teachers and students, and the news media.”
- **One of the editor’s jobs is to serve as a proxy for “we”?**

**and: What do “we” care about?**

# and: What do “we” care about?

**MMWR instructions for authors:**

**“Reports are based on science (especially epidemiology) or on public health policy or practice.”**

**“new and useful”**

# working definition of “useful”

# **working definition of “useful”**

**“information that people who read the report can apply to their work to help reduce morbidity or mortality or improve quality of life in a defined population”**