How to write ‘results’ in scientific journal article

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‘Results’ is the shortest section yet important as whole article depends on findings linked to the objectives, methods used to achieve that and discussion will depend on the outcome. 1,2

It is written in past tense to describe result already achieved, begins with the most important findings first. “The compulsion to include everything, leaving nothing out, does not prove that one has unlimited information; it proves that one lacks discrimination”. (Aaronson 1997) and "The fool collects facts; the wise man selects them”. (John Wesley Powell 1888).2

Table and figures are easy to understand. “……a good illustration can help the scientist to be heard when speaking, to be read when writing. It can help in the sharing of information with other scientists. It can help to convince granting agencies to fund the research. It can help in the teaching of students. It can help to inform the public of the value of the work…..” - Mary Helen Briscoe.2 The same data must not be duplicated in text, tables and graphs. All tables and figures must be numbered and cited in main text. Do not write, ‘Table xx or Figure xx’ shows this or that. The explanation should not be verbose and assertive, for e.g. “It is clear from the data that Ofloxacin inhibited the growth of E. coli”, rather should read “Ofloxacin inhibited the growth of E. coli”.

The title or legends are important like the manuscript title, short yet self explanatory, placed on top of Table or below the Figure (graph). Use standard abbreviations and capitalise each abbreviation (for e.g. Temp = temperature) and do not use periods (except "no."). Due to space constraint nonstandard abbreviations are frequently used.
Explain all abbreviations in footnotes below the Tables and Figures. In the subsequent Table the footnote for abbreviation is not necessary, mention, "Abbreviations as in Table xx." Table is suitable for presenting exact numbers data without changing trend, whereas graph is better for data with changing trend.

Choosing the right type of graph is important. Bar charts compare relative proportions and amounts showing trends and changes over time. Pie charts illustrate proportions and show changes over time. Line graphs show trends and changes over time. Multi-plot charts display correlations between events by combining line and vertical bar or combining two or more vertical bar graph, or stacking bar on over other or using a line chart with individual lines representing each data variable or using a scatter plot with two distributions.

Example 2:
Numbers include are well presented, title is self explanatory about the study abbreviations explained in footnotes, and table cited in the main text. . “The overall SSI occurred in 4.8% (15/310) of patients. Six SSI out of 154 (3.9%) occurred in GrAP and nine out of 156 (5.8%) in GrAPn... The overall SSI occurred in 4.8% (15/310) of patients...This slightly higher incidence of SSI in GrAPn was not significant (chi-square test, p > 0.05 or p Z 0.442; Table 2).” Abbreviations are described in footnotes.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.asjsur.2012.06.011

Example 3:
The title of table explains about the study, “Is Routine Hospital Visit after Day Case Inguinal Hernia Surgery in Children Necessary?” including sample size. The findings are mentioned in clear, short messages. Extra explanation is mentioned in footnotes due to constraint of space in table itself. Abbreviation ‘IH’ is not repeated here because its already explained in pervious table. The horizontal gridline is replaced by shading to differentiate rows and vertical gridline for column is removed.
(Source: J Nepal Health Res Counc 2013 Jan;11(23):35-9.)

Table 2. Wound infection among two groups of LC patients with and without prophylactic antibiotic had no significant difference (chi-square test, p > 0.05 or p = 0.442).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LC patients</th>
<th>Wound infection n%</th>
<th>No wound infection n%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GrAP, n = 154</td>
<td>6* 3.9</td>
<td>149 96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GrAPn, n = 156</td>
<td>9* 5.8</td>
<td>147 94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, n = 310</td>
<td>15 4.8</td>
<td>295 95.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GrAP = antibiotic prophylaxis group; GrAPn = no antibiotic prophylaxis group; LC = laparoscopic cholecystectomy.
* None of these patients were from the subgroup of acute cases.

Table 4. Findings of telephone inquiry after day care IH surgery in children (n=30).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents response</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did you seek medical help locally for pain for wound concern</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you observed wound and found redness swelling discharge</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did you have unplanned hospital visit within one week*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Were you satisfied, will recommend to others†</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One unplanned visit to hospital emergency on 5th day after surgery was due to viral fever and was discharged home after medication.
†Mother noticed swelling 6 w after surgery. This recurrent hernia was successfully repaired as day care. Mother was unsatisfied due to want of 2nd operation.
Jay: Methods

In summary - results are the backbone of the study. Show clearly the findings of what was done. Avoid being fancy! Tables and graphs add spice to it. However, too much spice spoils the taste!

References

3. http://abacus.bates.edu/~ganderso/biology/resources/writing/HTWsections.html#results