

EDITORIAL

WANTED: A FEW GOOD AUTHORS!

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Contrary to the title of this editorial—which is supposed to get your attention—we will accept *all* good authors. The demand for clinically relevant evidence in the profession of physical therapy has never been greater. Knowledgeable, intelligent, and evolving professionals, clinicians, educators, and students are continually seeking to advance their skills, justify treatment choices, and improve patient outcomes based on the available evidence. The *North American Journal of Sports Physical Therapy (NAJSPT)* is a peer-reviewed journal that reviews manuscripts that relate to all aspects of sports physical therapy for possible publication. *NAJSPT* publishes relevant, timely, and interesting papers that add to the existing evidence related to the practice of sports physical therapy. This editorial seeks to motivate and prepare the new or would-be author to go to the keyboard, and start writing!

Writing for publication in a peer-reviewed journal often appears a daunting process, one that is foreign to most clinicians and many beginning academicians. Scientific writing takes time above and beyond your regular work commitments. Few clinics or academic institutions provide time for writing! In addition to being costly in terms of time investment, scientific writing for publication is a venture fraught with possible pitfalls and rejection, so many excellent scholars and clinicians avoid it. To quote Jeffers,¹ as quoted by Foreman² in a similar editorial written in 2005, “Feel the fear and do it anyway!”

Many of you are experts in your area of practice. Many of you have ideas and thoughts to share. Many others conduct important clinical research in the context of your clinics. We would like to

encourage *you* (any and all of *you* who spend time reading this editorial) to consider contributing to the evidence in sports physical therapy via the vehicle known as *NAJSPT*. We believe that many authors exist who have just not yet begun writing.

Begin the process with a topic in which you have interest. Perhaps with a clinical technique, research conducted in your clinic, a controversial protocol, or that Masters’ thesis or Doctoral dissertation that the world should know about....an idea is all that it takes!

Next, choose a type of paper you are going to write. *NAJSPT* provides a wide variety of outlets for your dissemination. Manuscripts submitted to the *NAJSPT* are reviewed under one of the following categories: Original Research Contribution, Review of Literature (Qualitative or Systematic), Clinical Commentary, Case Report, and Clinical Suggestion. Please review the pages at the end of the journal (and at the end of every journal) to see what is required for submission in each category.

Manuscript preparation: The writing phase. Remember that the best writing is preceded by planning. By knowing the guidelines for *NAJSPT* in the back of each journal, you can choose a type of paper and tailor your writing and citations accordingly. When writing, one of the hardest things to do is get started. We suggest that you write when you have a block of time with no distractions to dedicate to the project. (Kids and family commitments, laundry and household chores, email, and sports on TV always work to distract the authors of this editorial.)

When writing, we have found that saving the work often prevents frustrating losses of text that happen at the least opportune times. When ready, share your draft with a trusted colleague who can critique your work and suggest changes or help you clarify your writing. We find that what is “clear” to the original author may not be so clear to another reader, so this process of sharing and clar-

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ification is helpful prior to submission. Our suggestion is to take 1-2 days to digest your trusted colleague's advice before responding. Criticism may be tough in the short run, but in the long run, it will improve your manuscript. Remember to ask one question: Is the submission better? In most cases, the feedback makes for a better submission to a journal.

Also remember to cite frequently and make sure that your citations comply with the AMA style required by the *NAJSPT*. Abbreviations for journals should reflect the current practice as set by Index Medicus. We find that the use of a reference manager will help you avoid renumbering or redoing references in the event that an additional reference must be added when the manuscript is complete.

Be sure to get written permission from any clinic or persons that you use in photographs. If you use figures, diagrams, or artwork from other sources, seek permission to have copyright release prior to publication.

Submission of your article. Most journals have a set format in which to submit manuscripts and any tables, figures, or pictures. The preferred method for the *NAJSPT* is electronic; however, authors can also put forward a paper submission. A copy of the manuscript on CD should accompany the paper submission.

The review and editorial process. All manuscripts submitted are peer-reviewed in a blind process by at least two members of the *NAJSPT* Editorial Board — who provide a recommendation for acceptance, revision, or rejection to one of the Associate Editors. The Associate Editor then summarizes the reviews and sends a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief. The final decision concerning the publication of a manuscript is solely the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief. Rarely does the review process result in a complete rejection of the manuscript with no feedback. Rather, the review should be seen as a form of peer feedback with assistance and comments that may make the manuscript more clear to the end reader or strengthen the results. As members of the editorial staff of *NAJSPT*, we will say that feedback from those who have undergone the review process is overwhelmingly positive, and the people submitting usually thank us even when the manuscript is rejected. To date, the *NAJSPT* has an acceptance rate approaching 70% with a submission to decision time of approximately four months.

Conclusion. We sincerely hope that this review of instructions to authors and considerations for writing contained in this editorial will help you get started on the writing track! The utility, clinical relevance, and timeliness of information to be shared with the sports rehabilitation community is up to *you*. You are the writers that will fill the pages of *NAJSPT*, the journal of which the Sports Physical Therapy Association is so proud. We hope that these thoughts and ideas inspire you to get off the fence and write!

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REFERENCES

1. Jeffers S. *Feel the Fear*. London: Arrow Books; 1991
2. Foreman K. Write for us! Right for you? *Physical Therapy and Sport*. 2005;6:113-115.