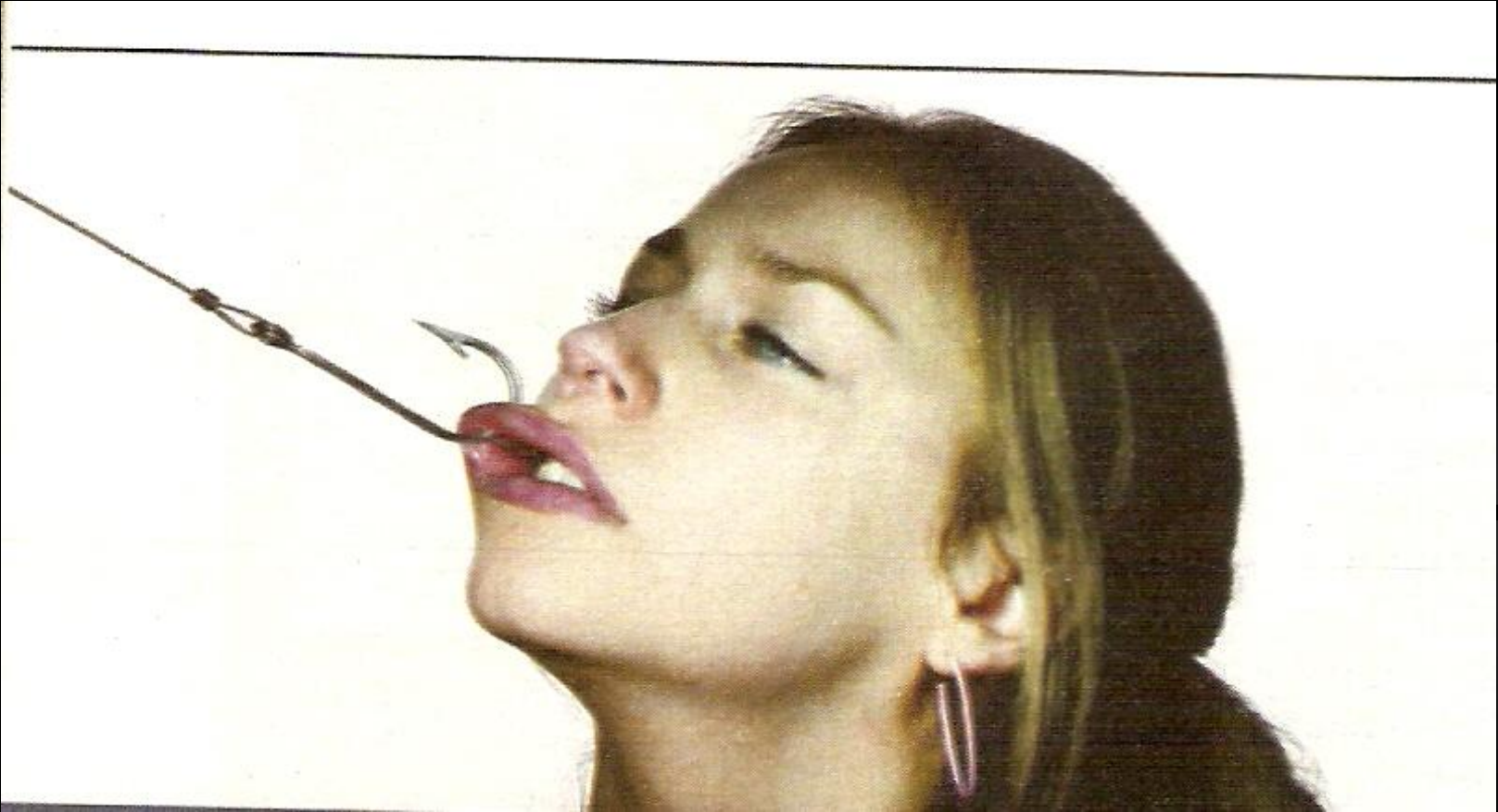


*1st South American  
IACAPAP Research Seminar  
Porto Alegre - 2007*



**Writing Workshop**

***The title...***



***...is the most important word  
construction in your whole paper,  
so write a good one***

# Title



- ✓ Your title will have many more readers than your paper, so make them want to read further!
- ✓ Make your title dynamic and attractive
- ✓ The title and the abstract often determine whether your article is read
- ✓ Search engines - MEDLINE - use title words to locate indexed research papers

# Title



- ✓ Too many authors choose a title immediately before submission
- ✓ Title + abstract are the components of the paper that the journal editors first review. They should, therefore, be composed early in the process and subjected to the same level of critique as the body of the paper

# Title



- ✓ Should clearly indicate the content and breadth of the study, and should not be misleading
- ✓ Avoid putting too much information into the title (e.g., conclusions) to keep the title as short as possible (generally 15 words or less)

# Title



- ✓ Put the most important key words at or near the beginning
- ✓ Never use abbreviations
- ✓ Spell out symbols rather than use symbol fonts, e.g. **beta** instead of  $\beta$

# Title



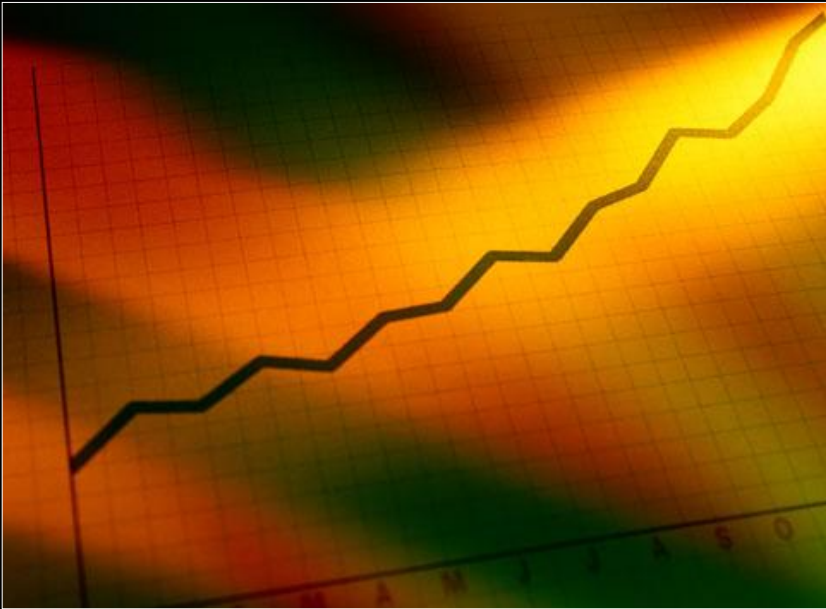
- ✓ Instead of: “A Comparison of the Effectiveness of **A** Versus That of **B** for the **C** Disorder”  
Write simply: “**A** Versus **B** for **C** Disorder”

# Title



- ✓ Always exhaustively revised just before the submission
- ✓ Interesting approach: send it to a person out of the team

# Results



What were the findings?

# Results



- ✓ Efficient technique - parallel to the Methods section

This makes for a logical flow that allows the reviewer easily move back and forth between corresponding sections

# Results

- ✓ At the beginning: review group(s) characteristics and composition, and study parameters (e.g., independent variable and dependent variable)

**TABLE 1**  
Demographic and Clinical Characteristics of Cases With ADHD-I and Controls

Characteristic	ADHD-I ( <i>n</i> = 100)	Controls ( <i>n</i> = 100)	<i>p</i> Value
Average age, mo (SD)	142 (39.5)	140 (38.5)	.72
Gender (male), %	68	68	1.0
Ethnicity (white), %	62	73	.13
Average schooling, yr (SD)	4.4 (2.7)	4.7 (3)	.12
SES (middle class), %	49	56	.13
Maternal ADHD, %	28	5	<.001
Average estimate IQ (SD)	94 (11)	99.3 (11.4)	.001
Alcohol use in pregnancy, %	9	4	.2
Average birth weight, kg (SD)	3.32 (0.6)	3.29 (0.6)	.74
Average maternal age at delivery, yr (SD)	27 (6.5)	27.6 (6.7)	.55
Comorbidities, %			
Mood disorders			
Major depression	4	1	.25
Dysthymia	4	1	.22
Anxiety disorders			
Simple phobia	21	19	.69
GAD	14	5	.05
SAD	8	3	.18
Social phobia	21	5	.004
Agoraphobia	11	5	.1
Disruptive behavior disorders			
ODD	38	14	.001
CD	2	1	.57

*Note:* ADHD-I = attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, predominantly inattentive type; SES = socioeconomic status; GAD = generalized anxiety disorder; SAD = separation anxiety disorder; ODD = oppositional defiant disorder; CD = conduct disorder.

# Results



- ✓ Dispassionately describe data and its subsequent analysis from a statistical interpretation only.
- ✓ Avoid interpretation, opinion (e.g., “there was a huge difference...”) as well as conclusions
- ✓ Present the results in varied formats to help maintain the reader’s interest

# Results



- ✓ If the experiment is such that the effects of several factors are being measured against an outcome, then the effect sizes of all variables should be stated so that the reader will know whether these are clinically significant
- ✓ Remember: Statistical significance is a statement of the strength of the evidence, not necessarily of clinical importance.

# Results



- ✓ Short and to the point
- ✓ Be sure to distinguish primary from secondary results and report primary results first
- ✓ Use tables and figures to reduce the amount of text

# Results



- ✓ Aim for a concise, economical style

It is clearly shown in Figure 3 that the **A** had caused **B**

**Better:** **A** had caused **B** (Figure 3)

# Results



- ✓ Report results that answer the question of the study.
- ✓ Be sure that for every result given, a method has been described.
- ✓ Point out the findings you will develop in the discussion.

# Results



✓ Most deficiencies:

- 1) disorganized (for example, the results may be mentioned in a sequence that is confusing)
- 2) incomplete (e.g., only some data acquisition details are mentioned in the Materials and Methods section)
- 3) It may mention data for which no mention was made in the Materials and Methods section

# Visual Elements are Critical



- ✓ The primary purpose of tables, graphs, and figures is to present data in a way that is easily and quickly grasped
- ✓ If readers go beyond title and abstract ...
- ✓ Develop a set that can stand alone

# Tables

- ✓ Pick up the content without reading the text and reveal the results at a glance
- ✓ Each table should be typed with double spacing on a separate sheet of paper and numbered consecutively in the order of their first citation in the text

# Tables



- ✓ Statistical measures of variations, such as standard deviation and standard error of the mean should be identified
- ✓ Each table must be cited in the text

# Tables



- ✓ Precise numeric values – paper more readable
- ✓ Synthesize existing literature
- ✓ Explain variables
- ✓ The way patients go into the study

# Tables



The most common and significant problems:

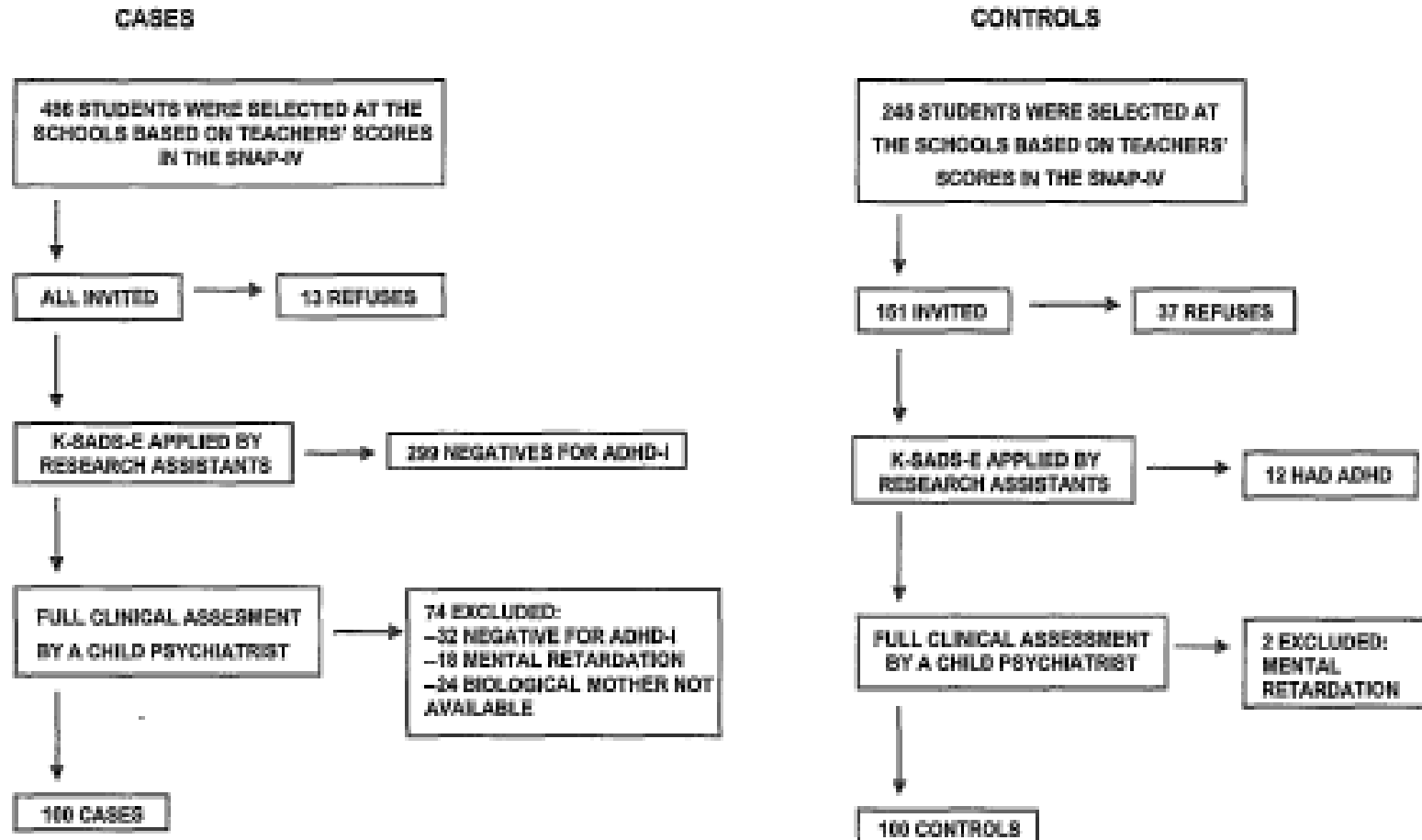
- 1) authors will attempt to present too much information
- 2) create an overly complex smattering of numbers that will almost surely be ignored by all readers

# Figures



- ✓ Provide visual impact and thus is often the best way to communicate the primary finding
- ✓ Are traditionally used to display trends and group results but can also be used effectively to communicate processes or to display detailed data simply

SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY AND ADHD-I



**Fig. 1** Flowchart of the patients' participation. SNAP-IV = Swanson, Nolan, and Pelham Questionnaire-Revised; K-SADS-E = Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia for School-Age Children, Epidemiological Version; ADHD = attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder; ADHD-I = attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, predominantly inattentive type.

# Figures

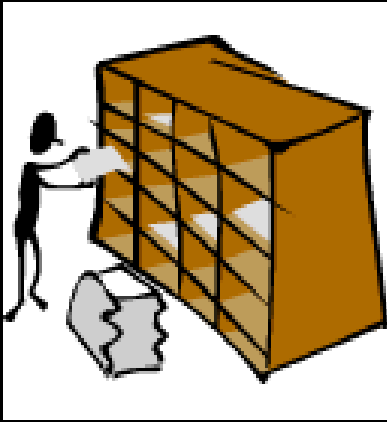


Check the journal's "Instructions to Authors" and/or other issues of the journal to which you plan to submit to see how many figures are allowed or generally used

# Figures



- ✓ As self-contained as possible
- ✓ Give it both a title (on the figure itself) and an informative caption (below it)
- ✓ Make sure that the axes are properly labelled, that units are defined
- ✓ Label each curve of graphs
- ✓ Good figures are reproduced or imitated by others, often without asking



The preparation of a scientific paper has less to do with literary skill than with **organization**

A scientific paper is not literature

It is NEVER too early to start