THE ANNALS OF AFRICAN SURGERY

Scientific Writing For the Surgical Trainee

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Editor in Chief
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SURGICAL SOCIETY OF KENYA SSK

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Outline

- Why
- How
- Tell the World

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WHY?

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Me,Myself and I

- MMed
- Before graduation
- Job
- Promotion/Tenure
- Grants
- Recognition
- Network with others

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For Humanity

- Global or Local question
- Inform the world
- Validate a new technique/aspect
- Document your experience
- Stimulate Interest

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How?

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Start Early…..Now

- Join Existing Study
- Simple solo projects
- Practice makes Perfect
- Manage Expectations

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Form Teams

- Learning
- Collaboration
- Impact
- Funding

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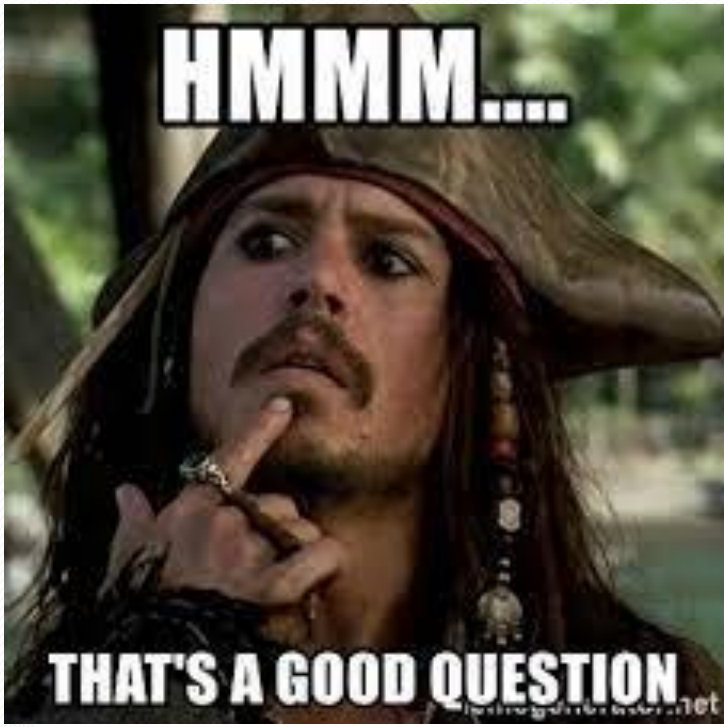
Formulate Good Questions

- New
  - Treatment
  - Population
  - Knowledge
  - Disease distribution
- Interesting
- Practice Changing
- Based on Sound Science



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Where Do I Start?

- Common Conditions
- Presenting as expected
- Managing them like others
- Outcomes any different

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Starting Point…

- What is topical
  - Specialty
  - Global
- Aligning to Funders/Policy
  - COVID
  - NCDs
  - Maternal Health

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Should be

- Clear – Easily Understood
- Focused – Narrows on a specific issue
- Concise – Needs few words
- Objective – Measurable
- Complex – Not Yes/No
- Arguable – Not Accepted Fact
- Relevant – To situation/times/specialty

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Should be

- Original – Novel, New Aspect
- Interesting – Appeals to target audience
- Researchable – Using means available to you
- Ethical – Human/Animal , Special Groups
- Analytical - Better than Descriptive

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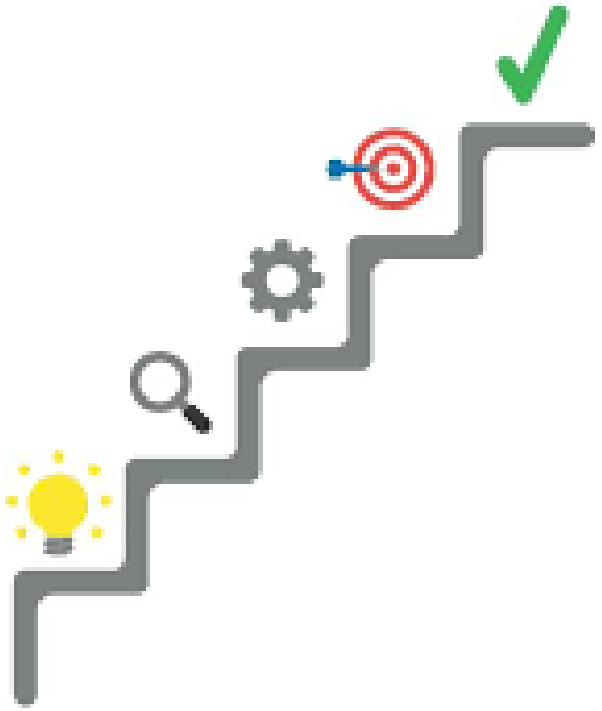
Steps

- Choose a general topic
- Research on the topic – Better than Armchair Speculation
- Consider Target Audience
- List Preliminary Questions
- Evaluate the questions



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Consider the Following

- Resources
  - Human
  - Facilities
  - Financial
- Expertise
  - HR
  - Clinical
  - Statistical
- Time
- Your Passion

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Steps…

- Consider HOW they could be answered
- Find a niche/gap
- Answer 'So What?'
- Hypothesize – For, Against
- PICO/PEO
- Begin your research!!!

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TELL THE WORLD

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Problems

- The dissertation is >50 pages long
- The dataset has >50 variables
- Journals will only accept about 3000 words or 4 pages
- You believe every single page of the dissertation/dataset is very important
- Not many people share that view

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Solution

- 1 dissertation – 1 manuscript?
- Not Really
- What are the messages in your dissertation?
- Break them down into simple distinct messages
- Write a paper for each of the messages

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Example - Dissertation

- Treatment and outcome of Ankle injuries
- Included data on closed fractures, open fractures and ligament injuries

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Example…. Messages

- Open Fractures should be managed early – Compare outcome of Early vs Late Mx
- Unstable injuries should be operated on – Compare outcome of ORIF vs POP
- Ligament injuries have poor outcome – Outcomes of ligament injuires

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Condense the Material

- Introduction – 1st 2 lines of the Introduction
- Literature Review – Body of Introduction
- Justification, Hypothesis,Objectives – Last line of Introduction

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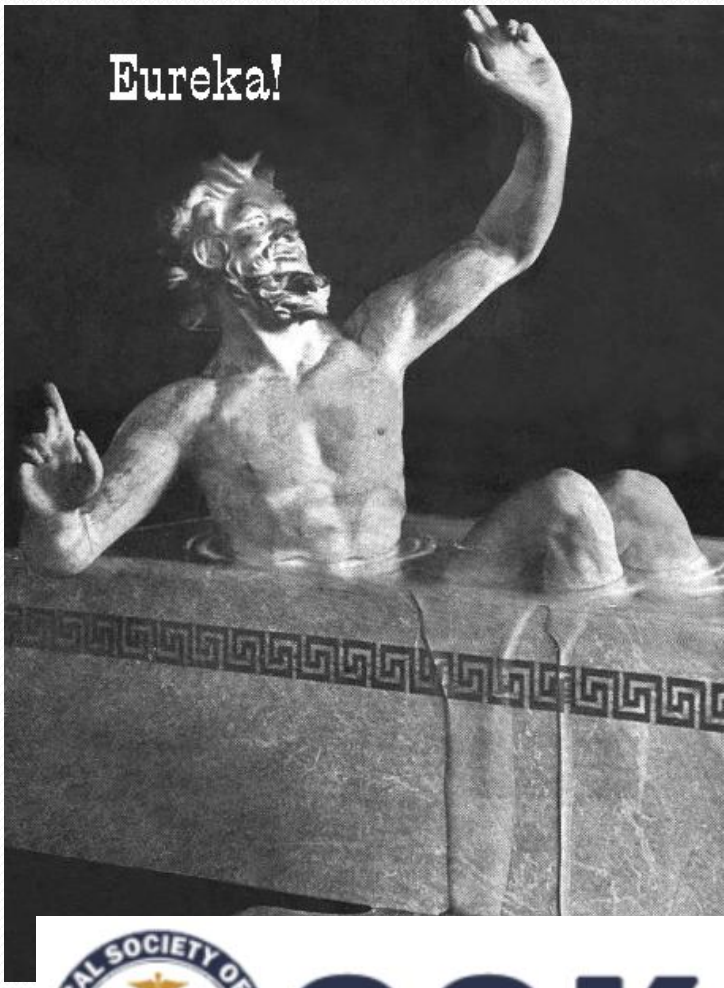
Condense……

- Methodology – Just the important steps – 2 paragraphs
- Results
  - Summarise the raw data first
  - Be candid (dropouts, missing data etc)
  - Only include the variables that tell the story you want to state
  - Figures and Tables should summarise results not require detailed explanations



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Examples.....

- Forty percent of patients who had fractures reported excellent outcomes when compared with 20% of those who had dislocations and 30% of those who suffered fracture dislocations.....

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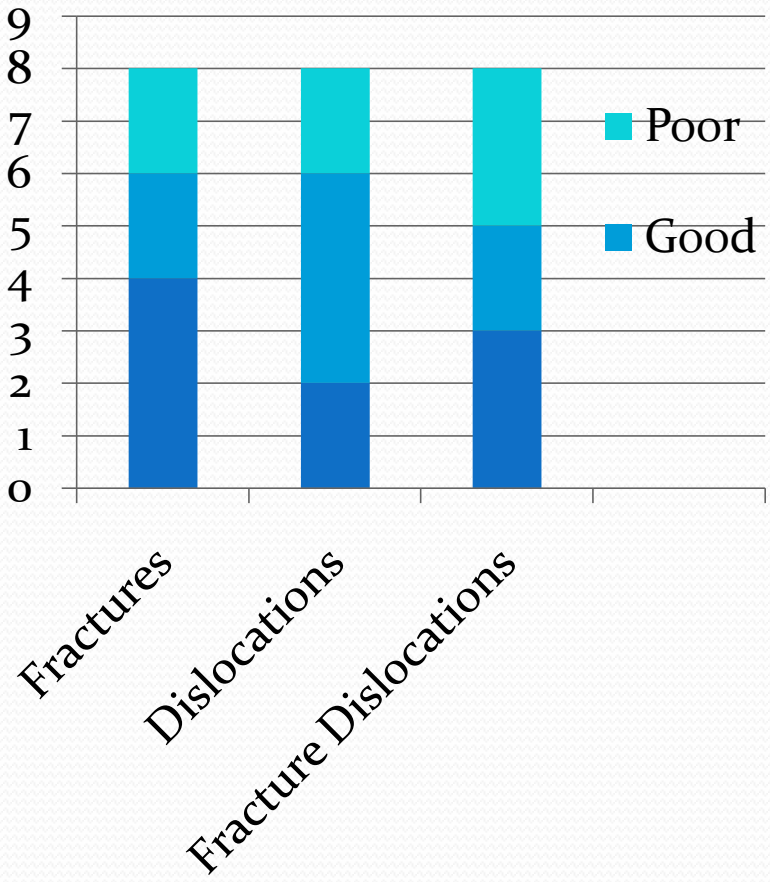
Examples.....



- Fracture dislocations were associated with a higher incidence of poor outcomes (Figure X)

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Discussion

- Paragraph 1 – Summarise important results
- Paragraph 2 – How does your data compare to other studies
- Paragraph 3 – Postulate as to why your results are as they are
- Conclusion – What is the implication of the results in science

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Summary

- Altruistic Research
- Collaboration
- Ask Good Questions
- Distil Dissertation
- Publish or Perish

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