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IP Journal of Nutrition, Metabolism and Health Science

Journal homepage: <https://www.jnmhs.com/>

Editorial

Thinking out of the Box

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 10-06-2024

Accepted 24-06-2024

Available online 12-07-2024

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1. Introduction

Letter to editor usually a short form of communication which can be written on any topic of interest that may attract the attention of the readers. The most frequent reason for writing a letter to editor is to comment on a published article.¹ However, these interpretations should be objective, and constructive comments, and the authors of this article are invited to respond to these letters (author's response to the letter). International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) has always recommended that publication of editorial letters in journals should be together with their answers.² Also few of MEDLINE-indexed journals print editorial letters with their responses under the title of original articles to prevent their escape from the attention of the readers.

2. Types of Letters

Concise and comprehensive reports containing all details can be expressed in a letter format.

Hence analysed the format of the article and the contents before writing any editorial letters for the journal, and also be through with recently published articles in the target journal. Since information delivered in a letter will be naturally restricted, a long list of authors should not be given. In fact, comments, and observations without any

significance will not be published.³

The editors are fond of concise, and clear-cut letters.

3. Format of the Letters to the Editor and Related Rules

The editorial letter is an acceptable format for making comments on a published article; hence it is always written to the editor and never addressed to the first authors. So thereby, editor's role becomes a mediator between the original authors and the current author with potential queries towards each other.

If the purpose is to criticize, then conspicuous, and evidence-based criticisms should be made; but all suggestions should be made based on scientific data.⁴ The general comments without evidence-based support will not be reinforced against logical determinations; hence LTE can get rejected.

Even though criticizing any articles, an elegant professional approach guarded by evidence-based writing should be followed. Use of rough, vulgar, pedantic, and pejorative expressions should be avoided. A kind, subtle question or humble comment is more effective because the authors of original articles will be invited to respond to your LTE.

In most of the journal; editorial letters are evaluated as other manuscripts. Generally, the limits are set. (ie. letters, ≤600 words; number of references ≤5, figures or tables

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none or ≤ 2 , and authors ≤ 5).

Table 1: Frequently errors in letters to the editor

Irrelevant comments on the published article
Avoid any general comments, comment should be backed scientifically
Avoid ambiguous message and conclusion
Lack of any new or helpful information
Be precise with figures or tables because too many can lead to rejection
Too many references
Never use aggressive language
LTE should never be a biased comment
The most important is commenting on personality or competency of other authors

4. Conclusion and Summary

LTE should be objective and constructive interpretations and discussions of scientific interest. They should give a clear message as crisp as possible with and clear language. During writing process of a letter, and a manuscript, frequently encountered problems are summarized in Table 1.

5. An Editorial Letter in a Medical Journal: A Practical Guide

Writing an editorial letter for a medical journal is an excellent way to engage with the scientific community, share your insights, and contribute to ongoing discussions. Whether you're a seasoned researcher or an early career professional, crafting an effective editorial letter requires attention to detail and adherence to certain guidelines. While sending a letter to a journal, priorly the following questions should be answered. What is the purpose of your letter? Is the format of your letter suitable to the format of the journal? Is your subject matter really worth mentioning?

5.1. Understanding the purpose

Before diving into writing, let's clarify the purpose of an editorial letter:

1. **Engagement:** Editorial letters allow you to interact directly with authors and readers, fostering intellectual discourse.
2. **Value Addition:** Your letter should provide value—whether by discussing controversial aspects, seeking clarification, enriching existing knowledge, or sharing professional viewpoints based current evidence. The view point should be open and not be biased.
3. **Publication Opportunity:** The most importantly that Letter to Editor is also counted as publications, hence

beneficial for your academic profile.

5.2. Reading and understanding the Paper

1. **Thorough Reading:** Any LTE (letter to editor) begins with reading the paper several times and in between the lines which you intend to address. Try to use SWOT analysis while reading the article. Understand its strengths, weaknesses, and controversies but comments carefully
2. **Critical Eye:** Identify areas where you disagree, find errors, or believe additional insights are necessary.

6. Structure of the Letter

1. **Introduction:**
 - (a) Start should be compelling enough to grab the attention of readers.
 - (b) Provide context for the topic you'll discuss.
2. **Body:**
 - (a) Present your arguments logically and succinctly.
 - (b) Use evidence (citations) to support your points.
 - (c) Avoid repetition of points already covered in the original paper.
 - (d) Be courteous even when expressing disagreement.
3. **Conclusion:**
 - (a) Summarize your main points concisely.
 - (b) End with suggestions or future recommendations.
4. **Cite Appropriately:**
 - (a) Use the latest and most relevant references.


7. Conflict of Interest

None.

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Cite this article: Ghosh S, Saboo B. Thinking out of the Box. *IP J Nutr Metab Health Sci* 2024;7(2):51-53.