The title (and subtitle) of a manuscript is very important. It contains the very first words a reviewer or reader of your paper reads, and often determines or creates interest whether one wants to read the entire article. Here are some basic principles to consider when you decide on an appropriate title for your manuscript.

1. The title should accurately reflect the content or key points of your paper (Often I find the title disappoints me because it is not reflective of the major objective(s) and “promises” of the paper. In fact, titles have been misleading and these papers tend to get “rejected”).

2. Title should be informative, concise and specific and mirror the key points of the paper. It should not be too general or broad (unless you are writing a review or editorial of a subject matter rather than discussing specific points of a topic).

   Undesirable title: Blacks and Substance Abuse
   Desirable title: Blacks and Substance Abuse Among Women in South Los Angeles

3. Subtitles: Excessive details in a title should be avoided because it becomes cumbersome for the reader to not only read it but also to remember what the title was at some later date. Subtitles should be used to amplify the title but not as a continuation of the title or a substitute for the title. The title should be able to stand alone.

   Undesirable title/subtitle: Incidence and outcomes of tuberculosis: In Latino labor workers.
   Desirable title/subtitle: Tuberculosis in Latino labor workers: Incidence and outcomes.

4. According to the editors of JAMA and Archives of Internal Medicine (AMA journals), the following practices in writing titles are discouraged:
   a. Avoid in the title, “Effects of, “ or “Role of,” unless randomized controlled trials have demonstrated causality.

      Undesirable title: Role of Vitamin C in the Incidence of Pneumonia
      Desirable title: Vitamin C and Incidence of Pneumonia

   b. Avoid questions in titles. They are more appropriate for editorial, opinion, or commentary articles.

      Undesirable title: Hypertension in Blacks: Is There a Cause?
      Desirable title: Determination of the Cause of Hypertension in Blacks


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