Writing in teams

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What do you want to say?

• Have a clear key message
• 5-6 concepts, no more than 20 words
• If you have more than one key message, you have more than one paper... share the leadership around the team
• Choose a journal to reach the people you want to influence
Deliver what the editors want

• Analyse the papers they publish
• Typically…
  – How many sections (e.g. Introduction, methods, findings, conclusion)
  – How many paragraphs per section?
  – How many words per paragraph?
  – What font do they use?
• Make your paper look like something they expect to publish
Get feedback from your co-authors (1)

- Small discrete writing tasks, a step at a time
- Fitting small tasks into busy days
- Get feedback little and often as you progress
Get feedback from your co-authors (2)

Invite quick, bite-size feedback on

• Key message, key concepts & definitions
• Mind map, or even draw it together
• Ordering the argument: a set of bullet points
Get feedback from your co-authors (3)

• Introduction: this is what we knew
  – About the immediate problem
  – From the research literature

• Methods: this is what we did
  – Design
  – Data collection
  – Data analysis

• Findings: this is what we found
  – Finding 1: statement
  – Finding 2: statement

• Discussion: why it’s reliable & important

• Conclusions
Get feedback from your co-authors (4)

- As you flesh out the paragraphs (one point per paragraph, keep the bullets for now)
- As you add references
- As you finesse the language to suit your audience
- Tell them what you want feedback on at each stage – content, structure, language, flow, citations?
Lobby the editor with a covering letter

• Dear [name of editor]
• Name of the article – original research
• Name of the journal
• 1 – 2 sentences on: aim/ research question; design; key finding; conclusion
• Who from that journal’s readership will be interested and why
• Confirm it has not been published before
• Or part has appeared elsewhere; or there’s an end of project report on the web; and what this paper adds
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