

How to Get Writing Done
 Presenter: Sharon Inouye, MD, MPH

Time	Section
00:57	<u>The Nitty Gritty: How to get writing done for biomedical journals</u>
01:19	<u>Sponsored by NIDUS – What is NIDUS?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIDUS is an NIA funded research network dedicated to advancing the study of delirium through development of research resources, career development opportunities, and dissemination of delirium science. • Get involved through applying to the Delirium Boot Camp, joining a Junior Faculty Working Group, participating in the American Delirium Society Meeting, and registering for the website deliriumnetwork.org to access the blog, resources, and announcements
04:38	<u>Finding YOUR Motivation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be different for every person, but some deep psychology will be needed to figure out what works for you • Something that works for Dr. Inouye is setting benchmarks and deadlines for herself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One of the early reasons she could not get papers done was because papers do not have deadlines, so she set them herself ○ These deadlines needed to feel real, so she would ask her mentor to review the paper at a certain date to be returned at a different date ○ Within the deadline, benchmarks are helpful to achieve the final goal, but consider other priorities to ensure all the time points are realistic
08:56	<u>Writing the Paper:</u> Inouye Outline Method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First start with tables and figures (typically 5) • Then create a detailed outline around these tables and figures. Start with the aims, then methods and results, and finally outline the introduction and discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No full sentences ○ 2-3 days spent on outlining ○ One to two pages • Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At this time, need to have already completed the review of background literature. ○ Need to state 2-3 key points about the topic as a background section. ○ Need to lay groundwork for the importance of the topic and then justify why the study is needed (cite other articles here) • Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe setting and subjects. Include institutional review statement/approval. Include study design, assessments, definition of variables, key outcomes, measures, and statistical analysis • Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Line this up according to tables and figures ○ Also, include key points that will highlight about the tables and figures. Stress in the text things that are not in the tables • Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First paragraph is take home messages, summary of key points. Should be some results cited, but do not reiterate results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sometimes, next include how this builds on future work ○ Then, strengths of the study/limitations of the study. Stress that despite the strengths, there are caveats to mention. For each caveat, show how it does not invalidate the work ○ Final with conclusion/implication/future work paragraph
17:01	<u>Writing the Paper:</u> Writing the Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take one section of the outline and start writing one at a time

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep in mind that the goal here is to “fill in the outline” ○ Write through the outline, including paragraphs after each bullet point ○ Do not stress about beautiful language, just keep breaking it down ○ Make sure to set goals that are not overwhelming. ○ As you keep filling in the outline more and more every day, the task will turn into creating connecting sentences ○ This also caters towards fragmented time allowances ● Keep in mind that the first draft is simply a first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Future drafts will have time for editing and multiple inputs ○ There is no such thing as great writing, only great rewriting ● Tip: Read through papers, articles, and grants, and find ones you like. Dissect why it is good and try to emulate it. ● Tip: Cut out extra words and phrases when possible: Clarity is everything.
26:11	<p><u>How to Get the Writing Done</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is highly personalized – find what works for you ● Block out the time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Find where you can be productive, and then disappear. Dedicate that to writing time and do nothing but write ○ Keep it uninterrupted and defend that time ○ Take breaks within the time, but stay disciplined ● Motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For SKI, motivation was setting up appointments with her mentor ○ SKI also had rewards of chocolate
29:46	<p><u>Why is Writing Important</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Papers are the currency for promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grants, teaching activities, etc. do not matter as much as papers ● This is our job. This is how we get our ideas out and spread knowledge.
32:20	<p><u>Selecting Your Journal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentors will help you ● Need to target the manuscript towards the audience you want to reach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See what journals have already published on your topic ○ Speak to experts in the field and to mentors ● Identify a list of potential journals and see if there are similar articles in their Table of Contents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If they had not published your topic or type of paper recently, steer away ● Once selected the journal, get information of authorship for that journal and follow them
34:00	<p><u>Writing during COVID-19</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficult to get anything productive done ● Many competing demands on our time ● SKI tries to give herself 2-3 essential things to get done each day and break that down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritize what is most important ○ Then create a focus and set small goals to meet each day
35:52	<p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hustle. Get activated and motivated ● Your ideas and words are important. They need to get out there in the world ● Don’t be afraid to make mistakes ● Never give up
39:56	<p><u>Q&A</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How to organize information from literature search <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First, starting with major reviews of delirium statistics for the first sentence ○ Then, target the literature search to the areas that you are trying to highlight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not trying to summarize the articles, but rather highlight the key points or data

- Search for a systematic review if there are a lot of articles
 - For an original article, in general would only have 10 references for the introduction section
- How do you deal with feedback that is more critical than instructive?
 - You always have first author prerogative.
 - Get to the heart of where the feedback is coming from and try to address it, but it may be impossible to please everyone. At that point, you as first author make the decision
 - If you decide not to address the feedback, 99% of the time, it will come back from a reviewer
- How to find a topic of interest?
 - There is another lecture on this, but briefly, go with what is in your heart
 - The question that is most important to you will make the best paper
 - Run it by your mentors as they can help you refine it
- How do you know when your analysis is ready to begin writing?
 - Analyses can go on for years, so at some point you need to call it
 - Other times, once you've answered the question and achieved the goals, you're there
 - Most often, there is a deadline on the paper
- What background goes into the intro and what goes into the discussion?
 - There are no hard and fast rules
 - Different journals will have different guidelines and tendencies towards this
 - SKI tends to like more in the discussion, but if more is needed to bolster the reason for the paper then it goes in the intro.
 - Grant/journals may also ask to move it.
- How do you balance between sending the draft too early vs too late?
 - In our group, the first and senior author works together very closely to get a polished semi-final draft done first
 - It should be complete with abstract, references, etc before it goes off to co-authors
 - It does not have to be shining, but should be buffed
- How to deal with rejections without review?
 - These are increasingly common
 - Journals are struggling with getting more manuscripts than they can review
 - These generally occur because the topic or subject matter is not a good match, the approach is not a good match for the journal, or the journal recently accepted a similar piece.
 - Consider the rejections as a gift and address them before resubmitting.
 - There is a limited number of reviewers, and the likelihood of getting the same reviewer the second time is fairly high, so address the comments.
- Cross-disciplinary work – when pitching the paper to a journal in a different field
 - It may be more difficult as language and jargon is different. Will need to learn these
 - Across fields, there are different manners of writing. Review some of the articles and learn the style.
 - Make sure that people in the field are on your authorship work, they're giving you feedback, and you're listening to that feedback