

EIGHT TIPS TO PUBLISH A NEGATIVE STUDY

Most scientific hypotheses are false, but publishing a negative study can be tricky. These 8 tips can help you out.

1

TARGET THE APPROPRIATE JOURNAL

Always target the appropriate journal. It's of critical importance that your paper is targeted to the right audience.

2

MAKE A SMART TITLE

The title is the first thing the editors and the readers will see. Make sure it has an impact. Make sure that keywords such as "randomized trial" or "systematic review" appear when applicable.

3

AVOID "MORE RESEARCH IS NECESSARY"

Don't conclude the obvious - more research is necessary - in the abstract. Focus instead on what your study did show.

4

FOCUS ON THE METHODS

If a study has excellent methodology, was properly implemented, and had an appropriate sample size a lack of effect may be seen as supportive evidence that the true effect is either small or non-existent

5

FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS

Following the instructions for authors and writing a clear succinct paper are both ways that authors show respect for the journal and for the reviewers time. Watch especially for word count and formatting.

6

PROVIDE A THOUGHTFUL DISCUSSION

Think carefully about what your article contributes to the existing literature and detail that thoroughly in the discussion. Don't forget in the discussion to address the overall goals of the study explicitly.

7

PROVIDE A LIMITATIONS SECTION

Ensure that the limitations section is explicit in the article. Reviewers want to know that you understand your topic well enough to describe the limitations.

8

RESPOND RESPECTFULLY TO REVIEWERS

The peer-review process can be long and painful. However, you should always respond to each concern from the reviewers in a timely manner and with respect.

