

Editorial

The structure of an original scientific paper is usually composed of four parts: introduction, methods (or materials and methods), results and discussion. Each provides one type of information, and the whole should make the reader understand the research and its conclusion. In the analysis of texts submitted for publication, the methods section often needs to be reworked. This section will be the focus of this editorial.

The function of the methods section is to inform the reader how the study was conducted. When properly prepared, it provides information to enable replication of the research. Several topics compose the methods section in an original article: the *type of study*, which will be discussed in the next paragraph; the *research scenario*, with date, location and characteristics; *the participants* who comprise the study sample; and *data collection*.

Additionally, there are: *ethical issues*, *analyses* and *interventions*, which are described when relevant.

The research plan is understood by the study type, development or its design. It is the path adopted to arrive at the results. Some types of study are quite well known. One must only mention their names so that the reader knows what they are; for example, a cross-sectional study. This information also helps the reader to evaluate the potential of the design to achieve the study objectives. It is possible that complex, new or little known designs require additional explanations, accompanied by bibliographic references. There are writing guides for each design that are compiled on the site: www.equator-network.org/.

In some reports, there is no mention of design or we are simply informed that the study is qualitative or quantitative. It is necessary to clarify which type of qualitative or quantitative study. The mere mention of one of these awakens in the reader, who is knowledgeable of the matter, details of the theory on the subject, in particular, its strengths and limitations. Comprehensive and clear information about the materials and methods used enrich the story. The readers will appreciate it if they are awarded with such information.

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