

Letter to Editor

Prevalent errors in writing keywords of dental articles

Dear Editor,

All of the leading national and international medical journals make emphasis on some standards, in a section provided as a writing guide. This ensures their survival in those valid databases, which make the content of their articles visible. Two general standards are always considered, in this respect. First, applying Vancouver style for a description of bibliographic resources; and second, making use of MeSH for selection of keywords.^[1] Emphasis on observing these two standards has been made to the level that, in numerous research performed during the past few years, level of considering these two standards has been considered as a basis for evaluating papers' quality. In the most recent qualitative evaluation of keywords, those keywords provided in the articles of Iranian dental journals, published in English language and indexed in PubMed has been compared with preferred terms in MeSH. Findings of the study showed that about 30% of the keywords have not completely conformed to these terms, due to writing errors observed in them.^[2] Therefore, identifying prevalent errors in writing keywords by the authors provides the ground for the increase of presence of those keywords conforming to the preferred MeSH terms; and consequently, quality of keywords will be improved.

For the first step, there is a necessity for the authors to know that the main body of MeSH is formed by descriptors such as:

MeSH Heading or Preferred Term

Those terms selected from among different names implying a single concept; are identified as preferred terms.^[3] This is why; the term in Medline database is used as an indexing term.^[4]

Entry Term(s)

Those terms which are synonyms, quasi-synonyms, equivalents, close, and related to the accepted or preferred terms in MeSH; are referred to as points of reference used for indexing and retrieving. Consequently, they lead to increase in access points

to the accepted terms in MeSH,^[5] whereas, review of some prevalent errors in the aforementioned study showed that:

- Error 1: Some authors select their keywords according to the preferred term (MeSH Heading), but they do not care about their being hyphenated or difference in separation [Table 1]
- Error 2: Some authors select their keywords according to the preferred term (MeSH Heading), but they do not care about their being in plural or singular form [Table 2]
- Error 3: Some authors select their keywords according to the preferred term (MeSH Heading), but they do not care about the order of writing them [Table 3]
- Error 4: Some authors select their keywords according to the synonymous terms (Entry Terms) with the preferred term (MeSH Heading), but they do not care about the importance of selecting the preferred term [Table 4]
- Error 5: Some authors select their keywords according to the synonymous terms (Entry Terms)

Table 1: Conforming to MeSH Heading, difference in separation or being hyphenated

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Antigen Presenting Cells	Antigen-Presenting Cells	Immunologic Accessory Cell
Post-and-Core Technique	Post and Core Technique	Dental Dowel

Table 2: Conforming to MeSH Heading, difference in singular or plural form

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Periodontal Disease	Periodontal Diseases	Parodontosis
Vertical Dimensions	Vertical Dimension	Mandibular Rest Position

Table 3: Conforming to MeSH Heading, difference in order of words

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Mucoepidermoid Carcinoma	Carcinoma, Mucoepidermoid	

with the preferred term (MeSH Heading), but they do not care about their being hyphenated or difference in separation [Table 5]

- Error 6: Some authors select their keywords according to the synonymous terms (Entry Terms) with the preferred term (MeSH Heading), but they do not care about their being in plural or singular form [Table 6]
- Error 7: Some authors select their keywords according to the synonymous terms (Entry Terms) with the preferred term (MeSH Heading), but they do not care about the order of writing them [Table 7]
- Error 8: Some authors select their keywords according to the preferred term (MeSH Heading) or synonymous terms (Entry Terms), but using less or more terms in comparison to them [Table 8].

Table 4: Conforming to Entry Terms

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Enamel	Dental Enamel	Enamel
Dual-Energy X-ray absorptiometry	Absorptiometry, Photon	Dual-Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry

Table 5: Conforming to Entry Terms, difference in separation or being hyphen

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Fine-Needle Aspiration	Biopsy, Fine-Needle	Fine-Needle Aspiration
Micro-Computed Tomography	X-Ray Microtomography	Microcomputed Tomography

Table 6: Conforming to entry terms, difference in singular or plural form

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Root Canals	Dental Pulp Cavity	Root Canal
Silorane	Silorane Resins	Siloranes

Table 7: Conforming to Entry Terms, difference in order of words

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Primary Dentition	Tooth, Deciduous	Dentition, Primary

Table 8: Conforming to a part of MeSH Heading or Entry Terms

Keywords of Author	MeSH Heading	Entry Terms
Marginal Adaptation	Dental Marginal Adaptation	Dental Internal Fit
Salivary Gland Tumor	Adenoma, Pleomorphic	Mixed Salivary Gland Tumor

It is essential for authors to pay close attention to the differences between the terms they use and the preferred or synonymous terms. To prevent errors in writing keywords of dental articles, they should be aware that even the smallest difference in selecting keywords leads to another discrepancy in retrieving.

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