# Updated guidelines for authors

We have updated the authors' guidelines for submitting manuscripts to *EJOI*. Nothing has changed in our policy but the international requirements for reporting on health research are continuously evolving. I must admit that it is not simple and it is not going to be simpler, however authors and those interested in learning more will find a lot of useful information for refreshing their methodological expertise by browsing the Equator Network website (http://www.equator-network.org/). This website is collecting information on how to report health research in a transparent and accurate way. After having worked as an editor for several years, I do agree that this is one of the key points for presenting reliable clinical research data.

The other key point is to have clear ideas when initiating a new research project. While this statement appears obvious, I can assure you that it is much less obvious than you could imagine. It is essential that research is well thought out in advance by formulating a focussed hypothesis, selecting the target population and the interventions to evaluate, and using appropriate outcome measures and study design. This planning should be summarised in advance in a detailed research protocol. All measured outcomes have to be reported, not only the 'interesting' findings, otherwise results may be biased (selective reporting bias). More weight should be given to the primary outcome measures, which are those affecting patient quality of life such as a successful prosthesis, absence of pain and serious complications, a good aesthetic outcome, etc. Less emphasis should be given to secondary outcome measures, such as a 5% difference in implant stability or bone-to-implant contact, marginal bone level change or bleeding on probing. Post-hoc analyses (new hypotheses created after results are known) should be avoided since they are likely to be biased, outcome measures should not be changed or added after the study is initiated, the number statistical tests should be limited to the essential questions (the more statistical tests are conducted the more likely spurious results can emerge), and data of all originally included patients should be presented. Very often I see that patients with complications are excluded from the analysis. It should be obvious that if all the complications are removed then the results can only be positive. The duration of the follow-up among patients in the same study should be similar otherwise it is difficult to extrapolate reliable conclusions.

To conduct clinical research is not an easy and straightforward process. Specific competence and training is required; fortunately there are detailed and transparent guidelines for helping researchers plan and report reliable studies. Some time has to be spent on planning clinical studies but it is an investment that is worth the effort, trust me.

Yours truly,
Marco Esposito
Editor-in-Chief