

# Analysis of Titles of pathology dissertation submitted to Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences. Bengaluru.

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## Abstract

**Aim :** To study the practice of postgraduate students of MD pathology in the use of titles for their dissertation .We analyzed 87 titles of pathology dissertations, submitted to Rajiv Gandhi university of Health Sciences (RGUHS) Bengaluru.

**Methods :** We analyzed 87 titles of pathology dissertation submitted to RGUHS over a three year period from 2009-2011. Titles were obtained from RGUHS website. We classified them based on the type, number of words and punctuation used.

**Results :** Of the 87 titles reviewed most of them (75.86 %) were descriptive & one to ten words were used in majority(55.17) & hyphen was the punctuation used in 17 titles( 17.24 %.)

**Conclusion :** Majority of the titles were descriptive, lengthy titles were rare and hyphen was the most common punctuation mark used. We did not find metaphors, vague expression, fancy, double meaning titles & conclude that dissertation being a part of curricular activity students and guide abide by the guidelines of RGUHS. An apprehension of dissertation being rejected by the evaluator, probably prevents usage of fancy titles.

**Keywords:** Pathology and dissertation health University

## Introduction

Titling an article, scientific writing, dissertation or any other work that needs to be published is as important a task as naming a child. Many parents agree that they spent a lot of time on the internet using different search engines to find a suitable name for their child, which not only conveys sex of the child but also is meaningful, short, sweet, easy for usage, bring luck etc. Similarly it is important to phrase the title of a scientific writing or research work. It should be informative, captivating, convey methodology, place of work and what the article is about etc. Title is the first contact a prospective reader makes with a scientific paper<sup>1</sup>

Titles influence publication success as the editor sees the title first. Title and abstract are the most visible parts of an article hence title must be accurate, informative, complete so also enable it to be searched through databases using electronic search engines. Most people read the title first and then proceed to reading the rest of the article. Some tips suggested for writing titles are ,terms used should be specific, as descriptive as possible, roman numerals, abbreviations, acronyms to

be avoided as they could convey different meanings and scientific names to be written in full. Even if the entire manuscript is written well, a weak or poorly written title can affect the journal reviews and editor's impression about the scientific work. Usage of right keywords or phrases help readers to find your article when they are searching for that topic particularly.<sup>1-4</sup>

Title writing process has several steps and Bioscience writers.com guideline says several questions need to be answered by the author before writing the title. What is the manuscript about specifically? What is the study design? who were the participants? what are the main results?

Then the keywords & key phrases in the answers need to be identified along with most important aspects of the answers that add impact to the title.

Using the keywords, emphasis and impact information, title sentence has to be drafted, revised and edited to improve the impact. Impact of Informative & descriptive title is manifested in the number of downloads or citations the article receives.<sup>5,6</sup>

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There are three main types of title. Description or neutral titles, describing the subject of the paper & does not reveal the main outcome or conclusion. Interrogative (question) title indicating the subject of the paper in the form of a question that appears to the curiosity of the readers. Declarative Titles include main conclusions of the paper<sup>6</sup>

The four different formats of titles are nominal structure, full sentence structure, compound structure and question structure<sup>7</sup>

In a few pathology conferences and Continuing Medical Education programs attended recently, posters displayed by postgraduate students and consultants had eye catching titles which were interrogative, fancy, had exclamation marks, double meanings, Vague expressions etc. This prompted us to undertake the present study to understand the practice of postgraduates and guides in the use of titles for their dissertation. We wanted to know whether such titles used for posters are used in dissertations also and thus we chose our specialty i.e pathology dissertations for the analysis. To the best of our knowledge literature search revealed no such study on analysis of the titles of pathology dissertation. The aim of this paper is to share insights on titles and their different formats within a specific academic community of pathology and postgraduate dissertation submitted to RGUHS.

### Methodology

This is a descriptive study analyzing the titles of pathology dissertation submitted to RGUHS by postgraduate students of MD pathology admitted to various medical colleges of Karnataka under RGUHS in partial fulfillment of the regulations for MD pathology degree examination. The list of dissertation titles were obtained from RGUHS website. ([www.rguhs.ac.in](http://www.rguhs.ac.in))<sup>8</sup> We restricted our study to three years and included dissertation titles uploaded for the years 2009-2011. To characterize the titles, we used a typology which comprised various categories, classifying them according to the type of title, noting the number of words used in titles and abbreviations.

### Results

There were a total of 87 dissertation titles uploaded in RGUHS website for the year 2009-2011, out of 87 dissertation 71 belonged to females & 16 belonged to males.

Word count in the title varied from 3 to 27. In 48 (55.17%) titles Word count was <10 and were considered as short titles. 34(39.08) dissertations had a word count of 11-20 & only 5(0.5.74%) had a lengthy title with a word count of 21 to 30.

TABLE 1. Number of words in the Title

Word Count	Number of Titles	Percentage
1-10	48	55.17
11-20	34	39.08
21-30	05	05.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>

Titles were of three types. Most of them 66(75.86%) were descriptive type, followed by declarative type(21.81%). Only 2(2.29%) were interrogative type.

TABLE 2. Categories of title

Descriptive	Interrogative	Declarative	Fancy	Total
66(75.86%)	02(2.29%)	19(21.83%)	00	87

Punctuation marks were used in 24(27.58%) titles. Out of these 24 titles, Hyphen was used to separate the words in 15(61.5%) titles & comma was used in 07(29.16%) & two interrogative titles had question mark(8.33%).

### Discussion:

Whenever we come across any person, first & foremost thing we know is his or her name, as it is an important identify. Similarly an author introduces his article to the readers through the title. In spite of having only few words & being a minute part of an article, title play a significant role not only in catching the attention of the reader but also in conveying the content, significance & other important aspects of the article.

According to the instruction given by RGUHS, title of the dissertation should be appropriate, clear, brief & should justify the topic.<sup>9</sup>

In the present study majority of the titles were of (75.86%) descriptive type and interrogative title was least common (2.29%). There were no fancy titles.

As we all know, dissertation submitted to the university is subjected to evaluation by experts in the respective field and it has to be approved for allowing the student to appear for the examination. Thus dissertation approval is like obtaining a Passport for further journey. Dissertation is done under the supervision of a faculty who guides and monitors the work of postgraduate student. These facts along with apprehension of rejection of the dissertation probably, prevent usage of interrogative, fancy, and vague, double meaning titles for dissertation.

To improve the quality of the accepted articles, editors of journals give instructions to authors on how different parts of an article need to be written. Few journals specify that the title of the article should be concise, informative, stimulate the interest of the reader, easy to read Should be 12 words or less.<sup>10</sup>

To label and qualify a title as too lengthy or too short, specifications or instructions provided by Editor of that particular journal to authors needs to be consulted. In the present study 55.17% of titles had a word count of less than 10 & were considered as short titles, only 5.74% titles had a word count between 21-30 considered as lengthy title in comparison to title with less than 10 word. Since RGUHS does not specify the number of words to be used for title, this characterization appears to be inappropriate. Using either a too short or too long title appears to be a poor practice but Habibzadeh & Yadollahie report that articles with longer title obtained more citations. Longer titles are those which include methodology & or results in more detail & then attract more attention & citations. Their study also found longer titles in US than UK journals<sup>9</sup>. Writing a title for scientific article appears to be challenging particularly regarding its length. Author has to tailor the title to meet the journals criteria<sup>4</sup>.

Hyphen was the most commonly used punctuation mark for titles with compound structure, titles having two parts. Two titles had question structure and hence the usage of question mark. Question format of title may awaken the readers curiosity<sup>7</sup>.

#### **Conclusion :**

In this study high proportion of titles were of descriptive type and included the topic of the study. There were no fancy titles and usage of lengthy titles was rare. To categorize, characterize and know the appropriateness of titles of a research work, it is not enough if only titles are analysed. In depth study of the article has to be undertaken to know the study design, methodology,

results, sample collection etc so that we understand what the author wants to convey to the readers about his article through the title.

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#### **How to Cite this article :**

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