

The Results Section

Structure

1. First paragraph to support validity of methodology
 - a. Demographic and other baseline comparisons between groups
 - b. Reliability data
 - c. Some argue that all data available at the time of study participant entry belongs in the methods
2. Main data
 - a. Every study question should get its own paragraph
 - b. Only key data needs to be in the text to best highlight, much can be left to tables and figures depending on the study
 - c. Avoid complete redundancy between the text, tables and figures
 - d. Use reasonable numbers of significant digits (usually two for the standard deviation, mean to match)
 - e. Do not just state a difference, state the direction of the difference, and include P values, as well as confidence intervals if appropriate
 - f. If a comparison is statistically insignificant, consider whether the test is adequately powered
3. Additional data
 - a. Subgroup analysis – good way to address key criticisms or particular curiosities
 - b. Complications

Tips

1. If dense amount of data subheadings can be helpful
2. Quality figures and tables sell a paper, put effort into making these as clear as possible
3. For normally distributed continuous data mean and standard deviation is appropriate, while for non-normally distributed median and interquartile range is appropriate
4. For differences in outcomes scores minimally clinically important differences are helpful to include
5. If possible use the same ordering for study questions in introduction, description of data points in methods, presentation of data in results, and discussion on key points in discussion for clarity.
6. For a small series providing a table of each patient is helpful for others wanting to get fine detail and future meta-analyses