

BMJ



Tips write about too much

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Who I am



- locum GP in London
- a **clinical editor at the BMJ**
 - research, analysis, overdiagnosis series, education
 - Co-ordinate The BMJ's too much medicine campaign
- interest in EBM
 - MSc student Evidence based healthcare

Who you are



- doctor?
- researcher?
- patient?
- policy maker?

- have you published?
- on overdiagnosis?
- how many people have something that they would like to publish?

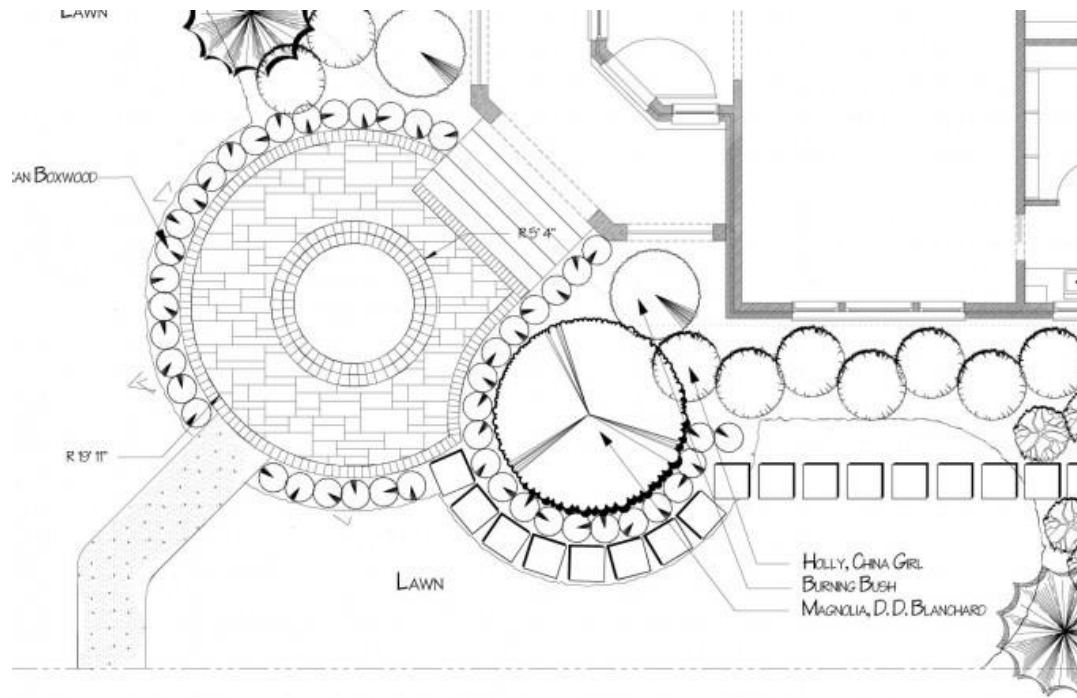
The plan in this session

Recap on some **basics** of getting published

How to adapt this for **overdiagnosis**

The opportunity to **think** more about your ideas

Time to ask **questions**



Why publish? understand your motivation

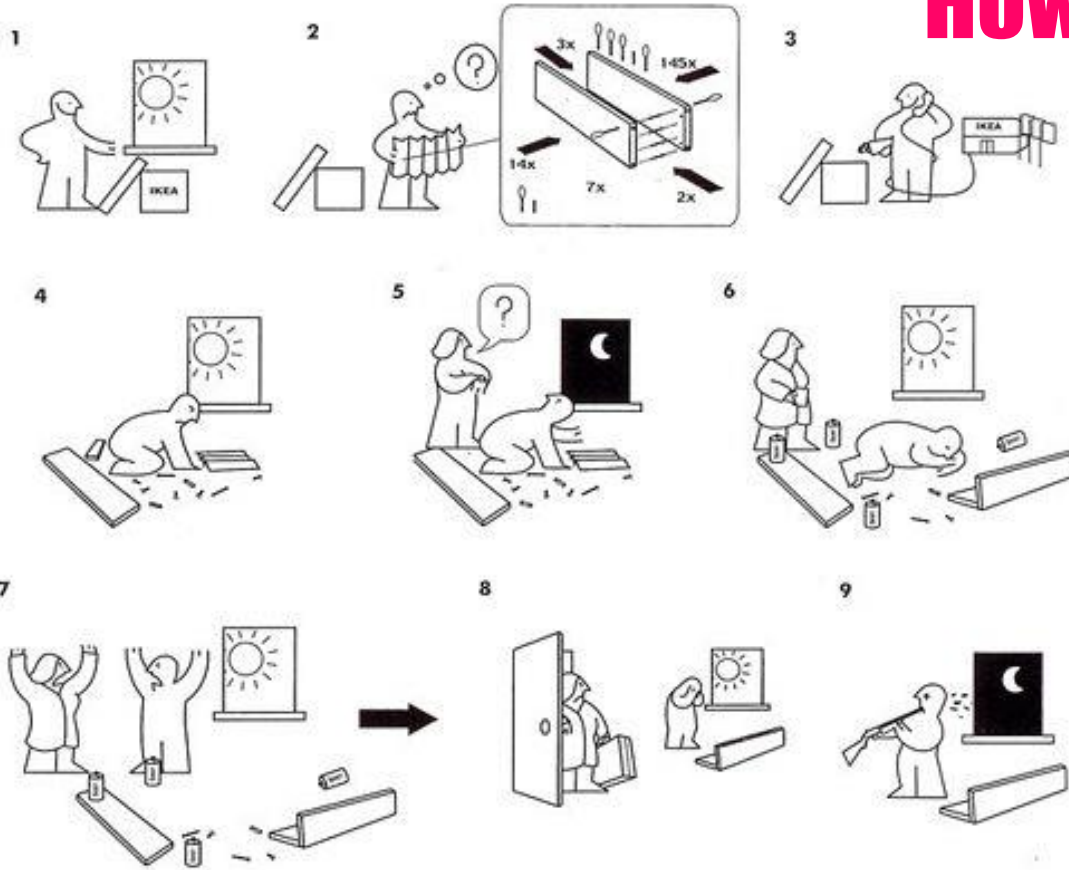
- for your career

... But there are more inspirational reasons

- say something important or provoke debate
- share experiences
- educate/reflect on clinical practice
- entertain yourself or others

basics

How to do it: consider



the idea

type of article

your motivation

the readers needs

who should write

where to submit

contact an editor first

how to write it? instructions online?

how flexible will you be?

Basics

what **editors** want

- the best content for readers
 - lay/professional
 - general/specialist
 - local/national /international interest
- to further the mission of their organisation in keeping with their values and culture
- depending on the article type...
 - to what extent is the information
 - original? relevant? interesting? true?





Basics

my writing notes

- write as you speak
- use words that travel well
- short sentences that communicate one thought
- write in the active voice
- call a spade a spade, avoid clichés and jargon
- use adjectives sparingly and only when they add precision
- don't tell the reader what to think – lay out your case well and let them form their own conclusions
- **pet hate words**: paradigm, significant

- consider the user's experience
 - structure
 - subheadings
 - learning points
 - boxes
 - figures
 - declared interests
 - referenced and attributed properly
 - consent
- the process
 - peer review
 - Revisions
 - legal advice may be sought

how is too much different? problems

- concept which is counterintuitive/difficult
- discussion of harm
- association with conflict of interest
- counter to guidelines/establishment
- politically difficult
- professionally challenging
- evidence may be lacking
- **solutions:**
 - language, science, make clear uncertainty, label other factors clearly such as ethics or resource, play the ball not the man, be constructive, write for your critics and bring them with you



writing options too much

- full spectrum of articles
 - research, comment, analysis
 - well read and well cited suggesting an appetite
- shameless plug/plea...
 - overdiagnosis series in the BMJ
 - describing the problem
 - analysis
 - Eg definition of too much, should we define disease differently
 - education (clinical matter)
 - solutions
 - working on offers to patients
 - for clinicians to enable better discussions
 - usable numbers - (ideally absolute) harm as well as the benefit
 - clear about uncertainty

writing options the overdiagnosis series

- authors lay out an argument of too much medicine (note generally diagnoses not symptoms)
 - pulmonary embolism
 - chronic kidney disease
 - thyroid cancer
 - pre-dementia
 - ADHD
 - low mood
 - gestational diabetes
 - mild hypertension
 - Mammography
 - abdominal aorta screening
 - bone fragility
 - COPD



**IT IS POSSIBLE
TO HAVE TOO
MUCH OF A
GOOD THING**

AESOP

PICTUREQUOTES.com

writing options the overdiagnosis series 2

- clinical context
- diagnostic change
- rationale for change/leap of faith
- impact on prevalence
- evidence of OD – lack of change in morbidity/mortality
- evidence of underdiagnosis
- limitations of the evidence and remaining uncertainty
- a better way forward for clinicians, policy makers, researchers

Questions and **your ideas**

