

How to Write the Discussion

This section should discuss the conclusions and implications of your findings in **5-6 paragraphs (~800 words or ~20-30%** of manuscript text). It is the heart of the manuscript, but should be kept brief. Be sure to **clearly articulate the main conclusions of your study, interpret their meaning, and answer the research questions** posed in the Introduction using the following format:

- **First and Second Paragraphs** should summarize the major primary and secondary findings of your study, but do not simply repeat data from the Results section. Be sure to emphasize advances in knowledge. What did you find and why is it important?
 - This study has shown that ...
 - The research has also shown that ...
 - The first question in this study sought to determine ...
 - The second major finding was that ...
 - The third question in this research was ...
 - An initial objective of the project was to identify ...
 - The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that ...
 - The relevance of X is clearly supported by the current findings.
 - One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that ...
- **Third and Fourth Paragraphs** should situate and compare your findings to other relevant studies. What have other researchers found and why are your results better, different, or confirmatory?
 - Several reports have shown that ...
 - As mentioned in the literature review, ...
 - Prior studies that have noted the importance of ...
 - Very little was found in the literature on the question of ...
 - Contrary to expectations, this study did not find a significant difference between
 - This finding is consistent with that of Smith (2000) who ...
 - Comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms ...
- **Final Paragraphs** should clearly outline the limitations of the study within the context of its objectives. This section should conclude by discussing the statistical and clinical implications (they can be different!) of your findings and linking the conclusions with the goals stated in the Introduction. What research should be pursued next?
 - This study set out to ...
 - However, with a small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be ...
 - Notwithstanding these limitations, the study suggests that ...
 - There are still many unanswered questions about ...
 - Further work is required to establish the viability of...
 - The study contributes to our understanding of ...
 - A natural progression of this work is to analyze ...
 - These results add to the rapidly expanding field of ...