

Common statistical mistakes in published articles in biomedical journals

*Excerpts from the presentation by Dr. Farrokh Habibzadeh MD**

It is not uncommon to see unnecessary precision in published articles from the Middle East. Sometimes the use of words is inappropriate, results reported are contradictory and p value reported is wrong. Points worth consideration are:

- * Do not imply greater precision than the measurement instrument.
- * Use only one decimal place more than the basic unit of measurement when reporting statistics.
- * Never start a new sentence with figures but with words.

For example: 15, 67.7% of patients who developed ES presented between 0-6 months after surgery, 9, 34.9% presented between 6-12 months after surgery and 2, 7.7% presented 12-18 months postoperatively.

Instead it should be written as: Fifteen (67.7%) of patients who developed ES presented between 0-6 months, nine (34.9%) presented between 6-12 months after surgery and two (7.7%) presented 12-18 months postoperatively.

- * Do not use average instead of “mean” and markedly instead of “significantly”
- * It is always helpful if the services of a qualified statistician are acquired before finalizing the manuscript and its submission for publication.

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