

QGSW Episode 4: Writing a results section

- N: Hi and welcome back! In the last episode, we saw how to write the methods section in an IMRD text. In this episode, we will focus on learning how to write the next section, the results. Many of the examples will come from this article.
- V: “Epidemiology of race-day distal limb fracture in flat racing Thoroughbreds in Great Britain”
- N: To recap up, the topic is a kind of injury which can occur in racehorses: fractures in the distal limb. The purpose of this study is to find out whether injuries like this happen more often under certain circumstances. As with the other parts of an IMRD text, the header for this section may say something other than “Results”. For example, “Findings.” Sometimes the final two sections--results and discussion--are combined into one. We’ve seen that the introduction raises questions. The results section provides the answers. Typically, it presents the research findings in two ways: by describing them verbally, and through tables, figures, and other types of graphics. Results are typically expressed in the past tense.
- V: “There were a total of 806,764 starts, of which 548,571 were on turf surfaces.”
- N: When researchers start a project, they have hypotheses or expectations about what the results could be. The results section addresses these expectations. For example, in this study, the researchers thought that there might be a relationship among certain variables, but there wasn’t.
- V: “No significant interaction terms were identified among the fixed effects.”
- N: Words and phrases relating to discovery or learning or understanding are often used, as in the following:
- V: “No significant interaction terms were identified among the fixed effects.”
- “When clustering by trainer was accounted for. . .”
- “The concentration of each replicate was determined to be 100% of the label concentration.”
- N: Hedging is also common. Hedging means limiting how strongly or confidently you express yourself.
- V: “Generally, older horses were at higher odds of distal limb fracture although an increasing number of previous starts decreased the odds of distal limb fracture.”
- N: The word “generally” keeps the reader from getting the wrong impression that the risk is always higher in older horses. An efficient way to present data is in figures, tables, illustrations, and so on. If your text includes graphic material like this, there should always be a reference to it in the running text.

V: “Table 1 summarizes the anatomical location of distal limb fracture on turf and all-weather surfaces.”

“A summary of the univariable analyses results for the all-starts and turf models is provided in Supplementary Items 2 and 3.”

N: However, don't try to describe all the information in your tables and figures; highlight the parts that are most closely connected to answering your research questions. So the Results section describes the data the study has produced, in words and with graphics. The Results section doesn't go into what the results mean in detail. That's the job of the next and final section, the discussion, which we'll talk about in the upcoming episode. See you later!