Reference styles and common referencing errors...

B. Gitanjali
Definition of a bibliographical reference

- A set of data or elements describing a document or part of a document and sufficiently precise and detailed to enable a potential reader to identify and locate it.
Why cite references?

- It indicates the sources of your information, quotations and borrowed ideas.
- Avoids plagiarism
- The purpose is to describe your sources in an accurate and consistent manner and to indicate within the text of your paper where the particular sources were used.

*If I can see further it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants*

*Sir Isaac Newton*


Three major systems of citing references

- Vancouver System, Citation order, Citation-by-reference
- Harvard System (APA system), Author-Date, Name and Year
- Alphabet-Number System
Vancouver System

- References are numbered and listed in the order in which they are cited in the text.
- Most common system at present.
- Gives more information than others.

  e.g.

  Cultural attitudes are known to influence compliance.\(^{1-3}\)
Which is correct?

Cultural attitudes are known to influence compliance\(^1,3,5\).

Cultural attitudes are known to influence compliance.\(^1,3,5\)
Harvard System

- References are cited in the text with the last name of the primary author and the year of publication.
- The reference list is arranged alphabetically by the author’s names.

Previous studies by Marshall (1968), Smith et al. (1977) and Harvey (1983) have shown that cultural attitudes influence compliance.

Previous studies have shown that cultural attitudes influence compliance (Marshall 1968, Smith et al. 1977 and Harvey 1983).
Alphabet-Number System

- References are listed in alphabetical order according to the primary author’s last name and cited by numbers in the text.

  e.g.
  Cultural attitudes are known to influence compliance. (1-3)
What kind of information needs a reference?

Do not give references for facts which are well known:

❌ *Staph aureus* is a gram positive organism (no reference needed)

✅ SARS is caused by a coronavirus (give reference)
References: Much ado about nothing?…

- Editors and referees infer that sloppy references may indicate sloppy work.
- Check, re-check and re-re-check
- Referencing indicates that you have read the background material, and are prepared to scientifically argue your work against a backdrop of what is already known on the subject.
Referencing - some tips

Which sources can be used for referencing?

- Use text books, review articles, original papers from journals, electronic sources - any source which can be authenticated
- Preferably, do not use newspaper clippings, articles “in press”; personal communication
- Never cite a reference which you have not read
- Be consistent and accurate
Referencing – common errors

Non-compliance has been observed in the treatment of a wide variety of diseases. Most of the studies reported that 30-50% of all patients failed to take their medications over a long period of time. Other types of poor compliance include errors in dosage, mistakes in timing or sequence or taking medications for the wrong reasons.¹
“Non-compliance has been observed in the treatment of a wide variety of diseases. Most of the studies reported that 30-50% of all patients failed to take their medications over a long period of time. Other types of poor compliance include errors in dosage, mistakes in timing or sequence or taking medications for the wrong reasons.”

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Referencing – common pitfalls contd..

Non-compliance has been observed in the treatment of a wide variety of diseases.\textsuperscript{1} Most of the studies reported that 30-50\% of all patients failed to take their medications over a long period of time.\textsuperscript{2-4} Other types of poor compliance include errors in dosage,\textsuperscript{5} mistakes in timing or sequence\textsuperscript{3,5} or taking medications for the wrong reasons.\textsuperscript{1,3}
Figure 1. Brain regions of current interest to the neurobiology of sleep. (Figure reproduced with permission from: Pace-Schott EF, Hobson JA. The neurobiology of sleep. Nature Reviews 2002;3:697-723.)
How many references?

• Check with the instructions to authors
Number of references is directly proportional to the year in which the thesis/dissertation is being submitted... 

Gitanjali

Hmm..let me add another 50 more and bring it up to a nice round number like 300..
Title: Risk of subsequent thromboembolism for patients with pre-eclampsia

Authors: Adam Cohn, Yasir Katib, Mark Walker, Jane Smith

Journal: British Medical Journal

Year 2003 Volume No: 326 Pages: 791-792.

Vancouver format

Book

Essentials of Medical Pharmacology, 4th edition
KD Tripathi
Published by
Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers (P) Ltd.
New Delhi 110 002
© 1999, K.D.Tripathi
4th edition 1999; Updated reprint 2001

Personal author(s)
Ringsven MK, Bond D. Gerontology and leadership skills for nurses. 2nd ed.
Vancouver format

19. *Chapter in a book*
(Note: Previous Vancouver style had a colon rather than a p before pagination.)

Article from the web

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors

www.icmje.org

• Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication

• Updated November 2003
Thank you