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Accurate reference citation and assignment of key words

KEY WORDS: *Medicine; Publishing; Bibliography; Abstracting and Indexing; Vocabulary, Controlled; Subject Headings*

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Vancouver Group of Medical Editors (numerical type), authors must strictly follow their rules for citation. However, authors should cite only significant ideas and results, only those important for the article. A long reference list does not necessarily point to a well-informed author. One should cite papers and authors with attitudes and results opposite to those obtained by the author as well. Papers of significance should be cited regardless of the ranking of the journal where they were published. Reference list may also include author's own papers (self-citations) if they are important for the topic, but this possibility should not be used too often. References should include the most current foreign, but also domestic literature. The author is obliged to study them regarding his topic of investigation and to select those that are important for his article.

Special attention is paid to Saric's classification concerning 28 reasons for citing a paper being divided into three groups as well as various possibilities of speculative citation and no citation at all (1). Intellectual integrity, good scientific practice and ethical principles apply to citation of used literature as well.

Accurate citation is necessary and important for many reasons: 1. Methodology of scientific research implies publication of results and it is compulsory for researchers; 2. It is required by editorial boards and reviewers; 3. It is necessary in order to find the cited document (checking the research and used references); 4. For interlibrary loans of full texts; 5. It is a confirmation that authors really had the paper in their hands; 6. It is applied all over the world (in the field of biomedicine, Vancouver Requirements are the world standard being applied for 25 years); 7. For Science Citation Index; 8. For citation analysis; 9. For scientific evaluation of individuals and institutions; 10. For establishing the impact factor on other researchers; 11. For establishing the impact factor of journals; 12. Creation of data bases and searches by certain parameters and so on.

The latest Vancouver Requirements date back to 1997 (2). Reference citation is based on the form used by the USA National Library of Medicine in Index Medicus (Medline) which follows

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principles included in standards of the American National Standardization Institute (ANSI) concerning bibliographic references.

Vancouver requirements include examples of reference citation from various sources of information, with precise data, their sequence and corresponding punctuation marks (2,3). The titles of journals should be abbreviated according to the style used in the List of Journals Indexed in Index Medicus and it is published: 1. In Index Medicus - January issue; 2. On Internet; 3. As a special publication; 4. CD-ROM - Serfile; 5. In the index of Medline database. If domestic journals are not included in this list, one should use abbreviations from the List of Abbreviated Titles of Yugoslav Serial Publications (4).

Below the abstract provide and identify as such, key words characteristic for the original document which adequately identify key ideas of the original document (5). The number of key words is not strictly defined, but they should represent the content of paper in the best possible way (at least one, five to ten on average). It is favorable for authors to assign key words themselves. Assigning descriptors may be done from the title, from the abstract or from the whole document. "Artificial languages" have been created for indexing. They consist of standardized key words that clearly identify certain items of certain scientific fields. These standardized key words are called descriptors (5). They have two roles. Firstly, they assist indexers in cross-indexing scientific articles, and secondly for searching corresponding databases.

The most important thesaurus in the field of biomedicine is the Thesaurus of the American National Library of Medicine: Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) (6) used for indexing articles published in most eminent world biomedical journals. According to Vancouver Requirements it is necessary to use these descriptors as key words in biomedical articles. This thesaurus also has a printed version - Index Medicus, on CD-ROM of Medline base or on the Internet. It accurately defines and identifies every item, as well as certain rules how to write these words, their order and punctuation marks. These descriptors are important for many reasons, such as: 1. They are the world standard for biomedicine; 2. They are important for indexing and processing publications in databases; 3. For authors and librarians searching databases in literature about certain topics; 4. The article can be identified all over the world in the same way, 5. All descriptors are in English and thus uniform, 6. They are important for journals because they are used for creation of Key Word Index; 7. For various scientometric researches; 8. For scientometric analyses. This standard must be recognized and applied by authors, editorial boards, reviewers, indexers and all researchers. Below the abstract in Serbian language authors should provide descriptors

in Serbian language. A Serbian thesaurus of key words does not exist, so they should be identified as in MeSH, but in Serbian language.

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