

## WRITE EFFECTIVELY: A QUICK COURSE FOR BUSY HEALTH WORKERS

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Radcliffe Publishing, 2008

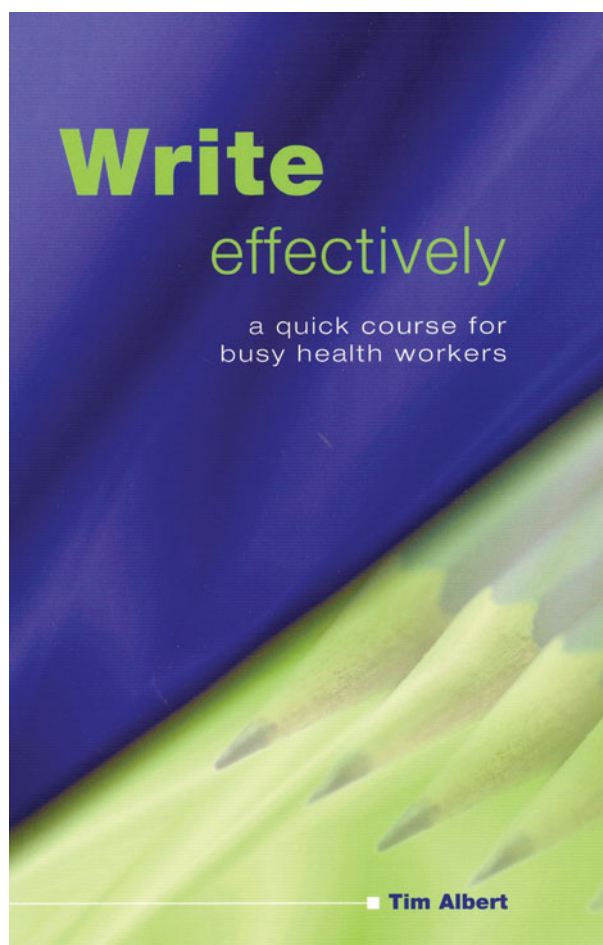
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This title caught the eye as something different from the usual series of books reviewed in *The Journal of Laryngology & Otology*. The publisher offers several similar works, which might just as well appeal to potential authors. This is clever. Book under review presents a series of exercises, in writing to get one's message across. Then, it stresses that effective writing is really more about achieving the author's purpose. The distinction is subtle but worth pursuing. If the purpose is to get one's paper past peer review and into print, tailor the content to what is required.

The book is based on a course that the author has run over 1000 times, over the last 16 years, aimed at healthcare professionals. Much is about style. Put the punch line in the first sentence of each paragraph, if you favour the inverted triangle. Scientific journals favour the IMRAD, but, perhaps, the hourglass works better? We all know Bill Gates hates passive verbs and afflicts us with those green underlinings as we struggle with Word, but would one's work withstand a Gunning Fog test?

The message here is that the scientific literature employs conventions which almost seem designed to make text unreadable. Huth's book, *How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences*, is surely long out of print, but is a personal favourite on preparing a scientific paper. This book is different and excellent at showing how to express one's thoughts on paper, with style and confidence. It is thoroughly enjoyable and thought provoking.

But (and it seems you can start a sentence with a preposition) this reviewer cannot close without a criticism. 'Check your facts' the author tells us... indeed, double check. Yet, in instructing us in the challenge of the apostrophe, he assures us that



Middlesboro' is an accepted abbreviation of Middlesborough. It has long been a point of honour amongst the Smoggies that the home of English soccer is not thus spelt!

L FLOOD  
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## Online Only Papers

### Abstracts

Proceedings of the 135th Semon Club, 16 May 2008, Otolaryngology Department, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK, E12

### Clinical Record

Anatomical variation of internal carotid artery presenting as pharyngeal mass, *S C Leong, D A Luff*, E13

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