Reports of research studies usually follow the IMRaD format. IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, [and] Discussion) is a mnemonic for the major components of a scientific paper. These elements are included in the overall structure outlined below.

I. The Title Page
   - Title: Tells the reader what to expect in the paper.
   - Author(s): Most papers are written by one or two primary authors. The remaining authors have reviewed the work and/or aided in study design or data analysis (International Committee of Medical Editors, 1997). Check the Instructions to Authors for the target journal for specifics about authorship.
   - Keywords [according to the journal]
   - Corresponding Author: Full name and affiliation for the primary contact author for persons who have questions about the research.
   - Financial & Equipment Support [if needed]: Specific information about organizations, agencies, or companies that supported the research.
   - Conflicts of Interest [if needed]: List and explain any conflicts of interest.

II. Abstract: “Structured abstract” has become the standard for research papers (introduction, objective, methods, results and conclusions), while reviews, case reports and other articles have non-structured abstracts. The abstract should be a summary/synopsis of the paper.

III. Introduction: The “why did you do the study”; setting the scene or laying the foundation or background for the paper.

IV. Methods: The “how did you do the study.”
Describe the --
   - Context and setting of the study
   - Specify the study design
   - Population (patients, etc. if applicable)
   - Sampling strategy
   - Intervention (if applicable)
   - Identify the main study variables
   - Data collection instruments and procedures
   - Outline analysis methods

V. Results: The “what did you find” --
   - Report on data collection and/or recruitment
   - Participants (demographic, clinical condition, etc.)
   - Present key findings with respect to the central research question
   - Secondary findings (secondary outcomes, subgroup analyses, etc.)

VI. Discussion: Place for interpreting the results
   - Main findings of the study
   - Discuss the main results with reference to previous research
   - Policy and practice implications of the results
   - Strengths and limitations of the study

VII. Conclusions: [occasionally optional or not required]. Do not reiterate the data or discussion. Can state hunches, inferences or speculations. Offer perspectives for future work.

VIII. Acknowledgements: Names people who contributed to the work, but did not contribute sufficiently to earn authorship. You must have permission from any individuals mentioned in the acknowledgements sections.

IX. References: Complete citations for any articles or other materials referenced in the text of the article.

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