Common Writing Errors...
And How to Avoid Them

Jennifer Pitterle

Comma Splices

A comma splice is

connecting two <u>complete</u> sentences (clauses) with <u>only</u> a comma.

Comma Splices

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes, the patients with the lower dose had worse outcomes."

Comma Splices

To join two complete sentences (clauses), you need to:

1. Add a conjunction after the comma
    OR
2. Split the clauses into two sentences
    OR
3. Change the comma to a semicolon

Comma Splice Fixes

1. Add a conjunction after the comma.

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes, and the patients with the lower dose had worse outcomes."

Comma Splice Fixes

2. Split the clauses into two sentences.

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes.
The patients with the lower dose had worse outcomes."

Comma Splice Fixes

3. Change the comma to a semicolon.

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes; the patients with the lower dose had worse outcomes."

Acceptable Conjunctions

Conjunctions: Yes!

- and
- but
- or
- nor
- so
- because
- yet

Conjunctions: Yes!

- and
- but
- or
- nor
- so
- because
- yet

The comma comes **before** these conjunctions. Don't add a comma **after** these conjunctions.

Conjunctions: No!

- however
- therefore
- thus
- unfortunately

~~Conjunctions:~~ ~~No!~~

These are actually conjunctive adverbs.

- however
- therefore
- thus
- unfortunately

Let's talk more about "however."

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes**, however** the sample size was very small."

Let's talk more about "however."

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes, but the sample size was very small."

Let's talk more about "however."

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes. However, the sample size was very small."

Let's talk more about "however."

"The patients with the higher dose had better outcomes; however, the sample size was very small."

Use simple language.

Use simple language.

~~may~~

might

"The pharmacists might use the new software as early as January."

Use simple language.

~~utilize~~

use

"This study used data from a 2010 paper by Dr. Jane Tanaka."

Use simple language.

~~explained~~

said

"We are very excited about this new phase," said Dr. Mateo.

Other Common Errors

Formatting a range:

"The patients ranged in age from 8-24."
"The patients ranged in age from 8 to 24."
"The patients' ages were 8-24."

"This study was conducted from January-May 2018."
"This study was conducted from January to May 2018."
"This study was conducted January-May 2018."

"Between" vs. "among"

Between compares two things.

"The differences between the green group and the blue group were significant."

Among compares three or more things.

"There was a lot of variation in hair color among Jane, Akeela, Maggie, and Parminder."

Compound adjectives:

When they come before the noun, they should be hyphenated.

"pharmacy-specific guidelines"
"physician-guided education"
"high-efficacy medications"
"low-performing strategies"
"patient-specific therapies"

Compound adjectives:

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"low-performing strategies"
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One exception: Compound adjectives that start with a "ly" adverb are not hyphenated. ("locally produced conference," "highly effective dose, etc.)

Use active voice.

Use active voice.

New patients **are seen** via telehealth.

Doctors see new patients via telehealth.

Use active voice.

Medication concerns are discussed with a pharmacist.

Patients discuss medication concerns with a pharmacist.

Use active voice.

A welcoming atmosphere is created by the large windows at the clinic.

The clinic's large windows create a welcoming atmosphere.

Use active voice.

It is estimated that 60% of patients had a positive experience at the walk-in clinic.

We estimate that 60% of patients had a positive experience at the walk-in clinic.

Thanks!
Be well.

Jennifer Pitterle

jen.pitterle@gmail.com
linkedin.com/in/jenniferpitterle

Survey for PSW!

https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1SlP8W5eVrcrcxw