

Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor: Editorial: Words Hurt – Avoiding Dehumanizing Language in Orthopaedic Research and Practice

Mitchell Maltenfort PhD

To the editor,

I read your editorial with great interest. I have one thought I would like to share on the topic.

My impression is that scientific papers are “dehumanized” deliberately—the

writing is stilted to take both reader and author, as individuals, out of the narrative so the scientific story stands on its own. That is why there is so much passive tense (“X was done” as opposed to “We did X”), for example.

That chilly effect of language is not so much indifference to patients as it is an attempt to meet an arbitrary standard, which may dehumanize the author and the reader as well.

(RE: Leopold SS. Editorial: words hurt – avoiding dehumanizing language in orthopaedic research and practice. *Clin Orthop Relat Res.* 2014;472:2561–2563).

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