



This series was written by Writing Tip Wednesday reader **Rick Hull**. Rick has been a health communications specialist with the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's (NCCDPHP's) Office of the Director for 36 years, many of them as a writer-editor. He is NCCDPHP's clearance coordinator and branding ambassador, CDC's logo-licensing and co-branding coordinator, and a reviewer in CDC's system logos clearance.

His favorite quote is "Great ideas are hogwash. Style and structure are the essence of great writing."
—Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*

Deadly Sin #2: Hedging (Overqualifying) to Death

Hedging, which we often see in abstracts and discussion sections, is appropriate when you can't draw a solid conclusion from a particular finding. Candor, caution, and even modesty are virtues when you're discussing implications. But you can overdo it.

Example:

It appears that this finding might possibly suggest a new mode of analysis.

Revision:

This finding could suggest a new mode of analysis.

Example:

Our analyses seem to show an apparent link between head injuries and age of diagnosis.

Revision:

Our analyses seem to show a link between head injuries and age of diagnosis.

OR

Our analyses show an apparent link between head injuries and age of diagnosis.