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Op-Ed Tips – by Dan Stone, M.D.

1. Pick a topic of interest to general readers.
2. Make sure that your topic aligns with your recognized expertise.
3. Physicians tend to downplay anecdotes. But, anecdotes are the *lingua franca* of the general public. If you have a dramatic example of a patient's story, use that to introduce your issue
4. If using a patient's story, obtain consent from the patient, even if not using their name. It's their story
5. Editors, like most people, prefer to do less work when possible. They will be more likely to use your submission if it reduces their own work. So, make sure that it fits their usual format.
6. Op-ed pieces are 750-word commentaries. If your piece is significantly above or below that you are reducing your chances of being published.
7. The standard format is double spaced. So, an appropriate submission is 750 words and is double spaced.
8. The ideal op-ed piece will start off with a sentence or two that draws the reader in and sets up the problem. The article should go on to explain the problem and why the general reader should care.
9. An op-ed piece is not a PhD thesis. It should use plain language. It is particularly important to avoid medical jargon.
10. The article should end with a conclusion about the problem or the action that needs to be done to address it.
11. Editors want to inform but they also want to entertain. A lively style or interesting patient story will improve your chances of getting published.