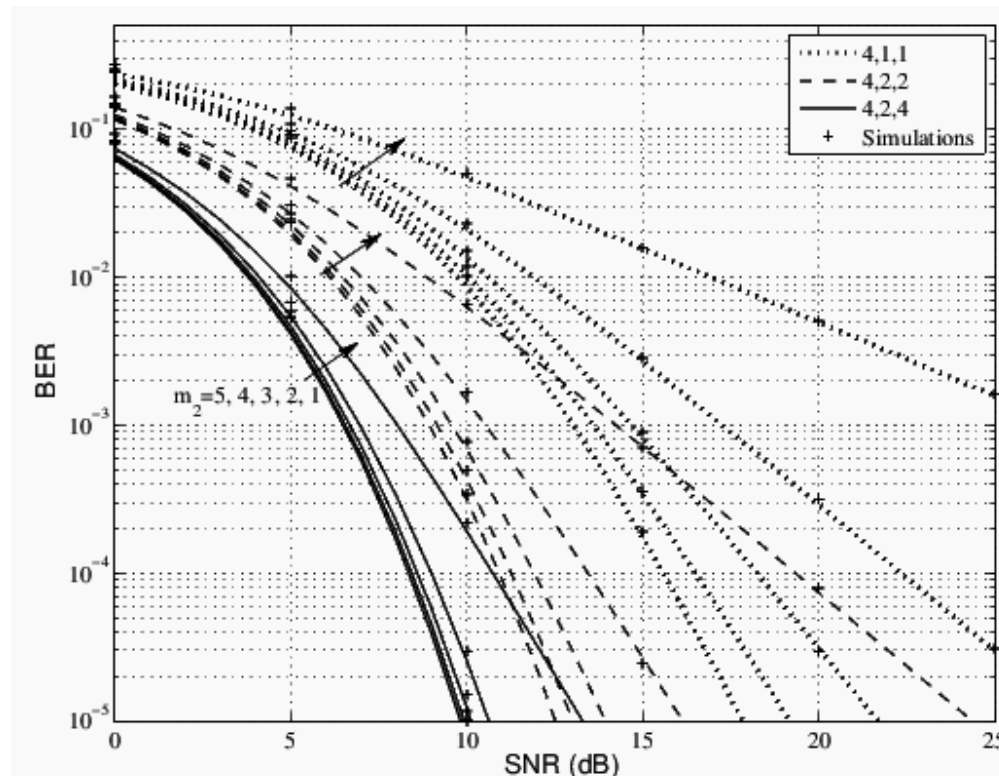


Some common problems with figures in scientific papers

Problem 1: A **bitmapped figure** was included instead of a **vector format figure**

Symptoms: The figure appears blurry, you can't read small text
Sometimes the background 'white' colour is not completely white

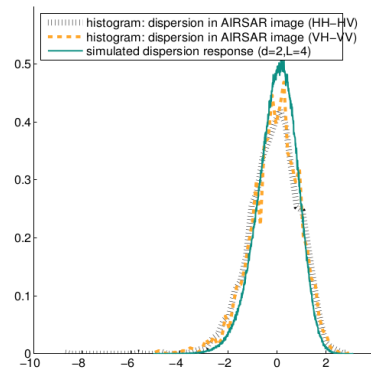


Solution: Always save your figures in vector format unless they are photographs (unless you can ensure that final image resolution is 300dpi)

Some common problems with figures in scientific papers

Problem 2: Axes are not labelled, or scaling is wrong

Symptoms: The text size is too small or too big or overlaps other objects, or it is impossible to understand what the axes represent.

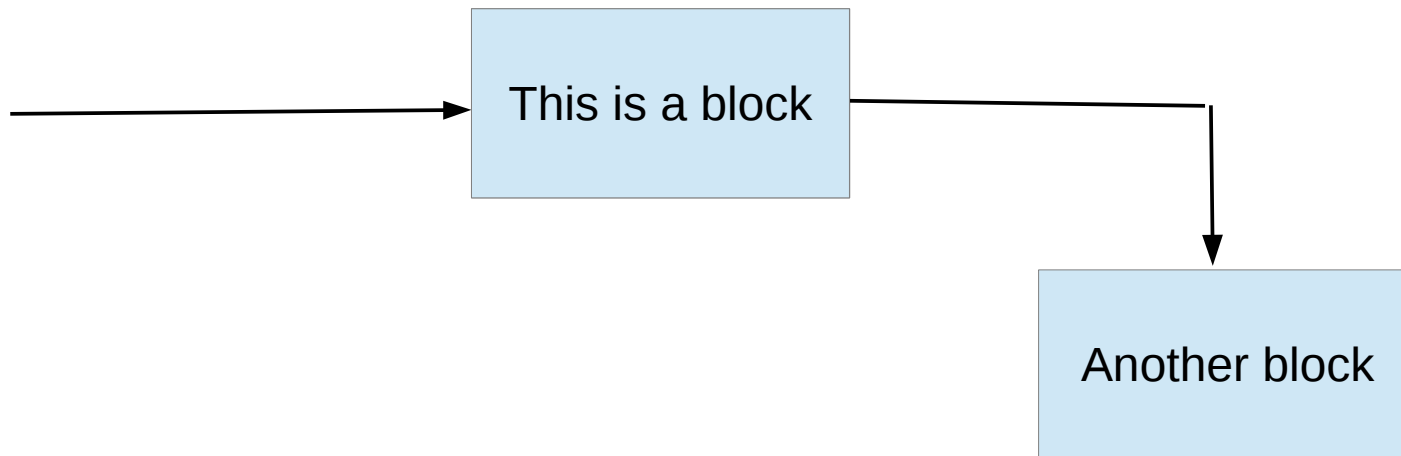


Solution: Always label the axes, make sure that the final image (if it is scaled) has text at size 8 point or bigger.

Some common problems with figures in scientific papers

Problem 3: Lines do not meet or are not horizontal/vertical

Symptoms: Someone has used a drawing program to create a block diagram, but some of the lines are slightly mis-aligned.

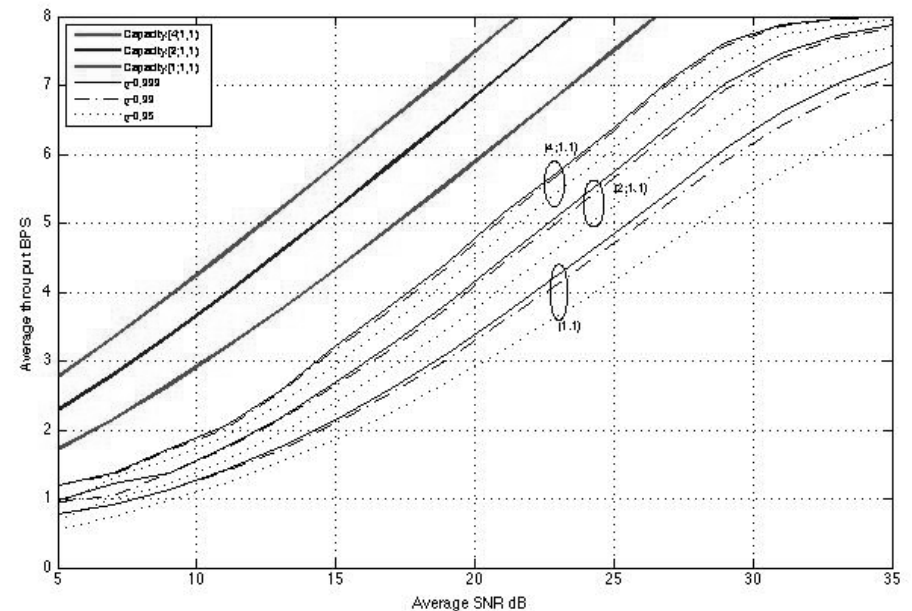
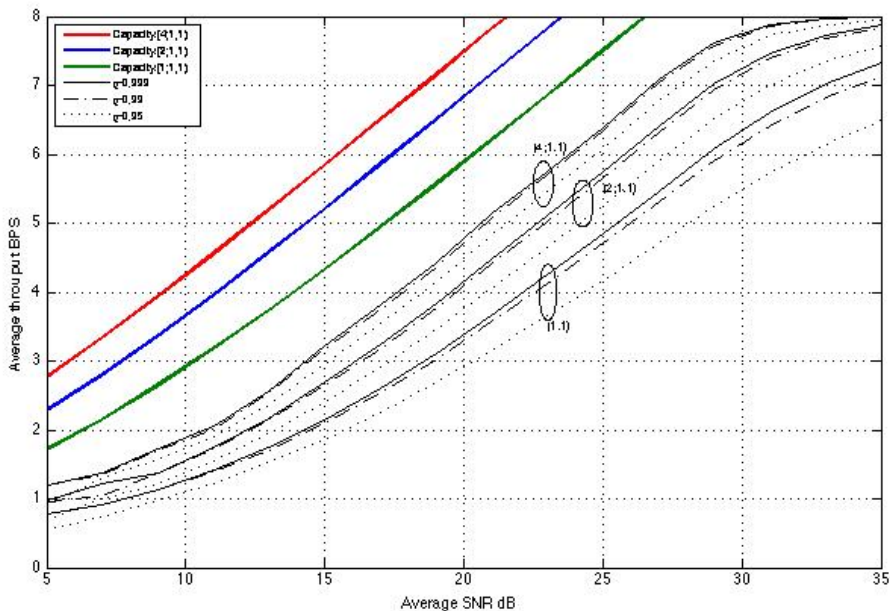


Solution: Always use a grid when drawing lines, or set the angle to either 0, 90 or 180 degrees.

Some common problems with figures in scientific papers

Problem 4: Inappropriate use of **colour**

Symptoms: Papers are usually printed in B&W. For most journals you can submit a colour version (but you will have to pay more than US\$1000), but some newer journals allow colour for the online version. But most people will print in B&W, so make sure plots can be understood in B&W! Also, colour plots are not considered “scientific”.



Solution: Either make sure you use greyscale for plots, or try converting your paper to B&W and checking to see if the graph is still OK.