Should *predominate* or *predominant* predominate in scientific writing?

Many writing experts hold that *predominate* is a verb, *predominant* is an adjective, and the use of *predominate* as an adjective is incorrect.\(^1\) However, the acceptable usage of these words is changing. Nowadays, *predominate* is often used as an adjective,\(^2\) although *predominant* is the more established and common adjectival form.

**Acceptable:**

Gastropods are the predominate Cretaceous-period fossils found in Texas.

**Preferred:**

Gastropods are the predominant Cretaceous-period fossils found in Texas.

Especially in formal and technical writing, the use of *predominant* as an adjective is preferred over that of *predominate*.

\( \text{EGFR}^{\text{T790M}} \) is the predominant mutation driving acquired resistance to EGFR-targeted tyrosine kinase inhibitors in non-small cell lung cancer.

Although *predominate* can be used as either an adjective or a verb, *predominant* cannot be used as a verb; it’s only an adjective.

Smokers predominate among patients with lung cancer.

Interestingly, the related words *dominate* and *dominant* don’t exhibit the flexibility of *predominate* and *predominant*. *Dominate* is strictly a verb, and *dominant* is only an adjective.

Like the adjectival forms, the adverbs *predominantly* and *predominately* are both used, though *predominantly* is by far the predominant word choice.

**References:**


--Amy Ninetto