Office of Faculty Affairs
Thursday Topics
January: Publishing

Today: Tips for Authors: Navigating the Editorial Process

January 15: Choosing the Right Journal; Writing to Get Published

January 22: Organizing Your Data and Beginning the Writing Process

January 29: The Peer Review Process and Responding to Reviewers

http://medofa.wustl.edu
Tips for Authors: Navigating the Editorial Process

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Objectives for Today’s Presentation

- What constitutes a publishable paper?
- Review authorship guidelines
- Present guidelines for ethical publishing
- Briefly discuss online submission
- Briefly discuss rejection and revision
Completion of research

Preparation of manuscript

Submission of manuscript

Assignment and review

Decision

Rejection

Revision

Resubmission

Re-review

Acceptance

PUBLICATION!

Adapted from a figure by Dale Benos
What Constitutes a Publishable Paper?

- A scientific paper is a written and published report describing original research results
- It is peer-reviewed
- It meets the criteria for “first disclosure”
What Constitutes a Publishable Paper: First Disclosure

- Council of Science Editors (http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/): “An acceptable primary scientific publication must be the first disclosure containing sufficient information to enable peers to
  - (1) assess observations,
  - (2) repeat experiments, and
  - (3) evaluate intellectual processes…

- Moreover, it must be
  - (1) available to the scientific community without restriction and
  - (2) be available for regular screening by major recognized secondary services (e.g., Index Medicus).”
Is There More Than One Paper?

A single large study may be the “seedbed” for dozens of unique manuscripts, all of them based on the same subjects and measurements.

Is there more than one paper? Possibly, if there are:

- Several unique research questions
- More than five or six key points
Before Your Submit Your Paper….

- Select the right journal
- Check the journal’s scope statement
- Follow the author guidelines
- Ask a well-published colleague for a pre-review
- Write to the journal editor with questions
- Proofread the final document
Categories

- Original research
- Invited reviews
- Case reports
- Perspectives
Is it Complete?

- Have you defined your research question?
- Are the Essential Elements in place?
  - Title Page and Abstract
  - Introduction
  - Materials and Methods
  - Results
  - Discussion
  - Conclusion
  - References
  - Tables and Figures (optional)
Essential Elements of a Manuscript

- Based on what was known and unknown, why did you do the study?
  - Introduction
- How did you do the study?
  - Methods
- What did you find?
  - Results
- What does it mean in the context of the existing body of knowledge?
  - Discussion
Authorship
Authorship

Before the writing begins, decide:

♦ Who will be responsible for writing?
♦ Who will serve as corresponding author?
♦ Who will manage revisions?
Criteria for Authorship

1. Authors must have generated at least part of the intellectual content, which means
   • Conception or design of the work
   • Data analysis and interpretation
2. Authors must draft, critically review, or revise the intellectual content
3. Authors must approve the final version to be submitted

All three criteria should be satisfied
Authorship: What Order?

- First author: Provides the greatest intellectual contribution. Responsible for collecting and analyzing data, writing draft of manuscript.

- Senior author, or last author: Has overall responsibility for the study. Provides mentorship (not just money) to the research project.

- Middle author(s): Placed in order of importance to the study.
Authorship: Not an Author

- Department Chairs do not automatically qualify as senior authors.

- Do not add your name to an author list because you paid someone’s salary, lent a computer or technician, allowed access to a database or laboratory, or reviewed the manuscript.
So…..Who’s an Author?

- The student who did the experiments and wrote the first draft of the manuscript?
- The technician who measured cytokine levels in 150 samples?
- The PI who had the idea in the first place, guided the student, and reviewed the manuscript?
- The Department Chair who provided space and resources for the study, dropped by the lab occasionally to chat, but knew little or nothing about the experiments?
Author or Contributor?

- All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship could be listed in the Acknowledgments section. Examples:
  - Person who provided technical help
  - Writing assistants
  - Department Chair who provided general support
Authorship: Changes

- Review your journal’s policy
- Change of authorship form (before publication)
- Corrigendum (after publication)
Ethics in Publishing
Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Publishing

- Intellectual honesty
- Accurate assignment of credit
- Fairness in peer review
- Collegiality in scientific and clinical interactions
- Transparency in conflicts of interest
- Protection of human and animal subjects
Ethical Responsibilities of an Author

- Authors should be knowledgeable about:
  - Conflict of Interest
  - Duplicate Publication, Plagiarism, Falsification
  - Prior Publication
  - Experiments Involving Humans or Animals
  - Fraud
Ethics in Publishing

Plagiarism

Definition: Taking the work of another. Copying a figure, table, data, or even wording from a published or unpublished paper without attribution.

How to Avoid: Provide citations to the work of others. Obtain copyright permission if needed. Do not copy exact wording from another’s paper to yours, even if referenced, unless in quotes.
Ethics in Publishing

**Duplicate Publication**

- **Definition:** Submission of or publication of the same paper or substantial parts of a paper in more than one place.

- **How to Avoid:** Do not submit the paper or parts of that paper to more than one journal at a time. Wait until your paper is rejected or withdraw it before submitting elsewhere.
Ethics in Publishing

Redundant Publication

Definition: Using text or data in a new paper from a paper that is already published. Also called auto- or self-plagiarism.

How to Avoid: Do not include material from a previous study in a new one, even for statistical analysis. Repeat control groups as needed.
Falsification and Fabrication

Definition: Changing or making up data in a manuscript, usually to improve the results of the experiment. Includes digital manipulation of images (blots, micrographs, etc.)

How to Avoid: Present the exact results obtained. Do not withhold data that don’t fit your hypothesis. Don’t try to beautify images with Photoshop—all manipulations must apply to the whole image.
Unacceptable Figure Manipulation

- Improper editing
- Improper grouping
- Improper adjustment
  - Authors should not:
    - Move
    - Remove
    - Introduce
    - Obscure
    - Enhance

any specific feature within a image. Images should appear as captured in the lab or clinical environment.
Ethics in Publishing

- **Human/Animal Welfare Problems**
  - **Definition**: Treatment of experimental subjects that does not conform with accepted standards and journal policy.
  - **How to Avoid**: Obtain prospective IRB/IACUC approval for the study protocol. Do not deviate from the protocol. Obtain approval for amendments as needed before altering the protocol.
Ethics in Publishing

- Conflict of Interest
  - **Definition**: Real or perceived conflict due to employment, consulting, or investment in entities with an interest in the outcome of the research.
  - **How to Avoid**: Disclose all potential conflicts to the Editor of the journal and within the manuscript itself.
Ethics in Publishing

- Authorship Disputes
  - **Definition**: Disputes arising from the addition, deletion, or change of order of authors.
  - **How to Avoid**: Agree on authorship before writing begins, preferably at the start of the study. Ensure that all authors meet criteria for authorship. Sign publisher authorship forms.
Online Submission
Do Not Give Up
Read the Instructions for Authors, especially those concerning the required figure formats.
Online Submission

- eJournal Press
- ScholarOne Manuscript Central
- Editorial Manager
- Journal-owned systems
Dealing with Rejection/Revision
Major Reasons for Rejection

- Inappropriate for the journal
  - Do your homework
- Merely confirmatory/incremental
  - Avoid Least Publishable Unit (LPUs)
- Describes poorly-designed or inconclusive studies
  - Focus on your hypothesis
- Poorly written
  - Great science in an ugly package can still be rejected
Revisions

- If your paper is returned for revision, you are in good company
- It’s OK to get mad, but don’t act on it!
- Try to understand what the reviewers are really saying
  - If the reviewers did not understand your work, is it because you didn’t present it clearly in the first place?
- Look for clues from the editor (the final arbiter) as to the extent of revision needed
  - Re-writes only
  - More experiments
Responding to Reviewers

- Complete additional experiments if needed
- Address all comments in a point-by-point fashion
  - Resist the temptation to prepare an impassioned response to points with which you disagree
  - Stand firm (diplomatically) if that is truly the right thing to do
- Sincerely thank the editor and reviewers for helping you to improve your work
  - They have invested a lot of time, mostly on a voluntary basis
- Ask a neutral colleague to review your response
More Tips for Success
Tips for Success

- Know the journal, its editor, and why you submitted your paper there
- Follow the instructions for authors
- Avoid careless spelling, grammar, formatting mistakes
- Make sure references are appropriate and accurate
  - Remember who your reviewers might be!
- Ensure appropriate file format, including figures
  - Is the on-line version the one you want the reviewers to see?
- Confirm receipt of submission
Tips for Success

Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication

http://www.icmje.org/
Resources and Acknowledgments

- Kim E. Barrett, Chair, American Physiological Society (APS) Publications Committee
- Margaret Reich, APS Director of Publications and Executive Editor
- Dennis Brown, Editor, AJP-Cell; Alberto Najletti, AJP-Heart
- Writing and Presenting Scientific Papers (Birgitta Malmfors, Phil Garnsworthy, Michael Grossman)
- Essentials of Writing Biomedical Research Papers (Mimi Zeiger)