The Editorial and Review Process

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*Parts of this presentation are adapted from a presentation by Morris Weinberger, PhD, UNC-Chapel Hill

Why do we talk about publications?

"He didn't publish, so he perished."

Publication expectations

You **MUST** understand the expectations in your situation:

- Department and/or School
- Future jobs/promotion
Expectations: common metrics

- Number of papers
- Number of papers in "high impact" journals
- Mean number of citations
- $h$-index
- $m$-index (m-quotient)
- i10-index

$h$-index

An individual measure of productivity and impact of a scientist/scholar

$H$-index $\Rightarrow$ $h$ papers cited at least $h$ times
**h-index**

A few highly-cited papers
Lower h-index.

Large number of highly-cited papers
Higher h-index.

Number of citations

Number of publications
(with y-axis # of citations)

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**m-index (m-quotient)**

\[ m = \frac{\text{h-index}}{\text{years since first publication}} \]

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**i10 index (Google scholar)**

Number of publications with at least 10 citations

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Types of publications

- Journal research articles
- Journal supplement research articles
- Systematic review articles
- Narrative review articles
- Methods papers
- “Thought pieces”
- Editorials/Commentaries
- Book chapters
- Books
- Abstracts

Value of publication types

- Types of research articles
  - RCT
  - Observational
  - Case series

- Regular or supplement?

- Reviews
  - Narrative or systematic?

Value of publication types

Should I write that book chapter?

Usually, the answer is **NO!!!**

They just aren’t worth the time & energy
When are book chapters worth it?

- The book is “important” in your field
- Your relationship with the person asking you to write it is critical for you
- The literature review will be invaluable to you

Value of publication types

- Thought pieces/methods papers
- Editorials/Commentaries

Why are these publication types useful?

- Make a name for yourself!
- Often, they are highly cited

Ward Cates

FHI – “volunteer”
Given paper to read
Translate paper & write “new” version
Publish paper
Abstract to publication ratio

Too many abstracts = “unable to complete projects” or “spending too much time at conferences”

- Need to balance need for visibility (through conferences) with need for publication and visibility of final product

- Avoid submitting abstract simply so you can attend a meeting

- Make your abstracts “count”

Impact factor: Choice of journals

Impact factors are one consideration

Measure of the frequency with which the “average article” in a journal has been cited in a particular year or period.

\[ \text{IF}_{2023} = \frac{\text{citations}_{2023}}{\text{publications}_{2023} + \text{publications}_{2021}} \]

\[ \text{5-year IF}_{2023} = \frac{\text{citations}_{2023}}{(\text{publications}_{2023} + \text{publications}_{2021} + \text{publications}_{2020} + \text{publications}_{2019} + \text{publications}_{2018})} \]
Impact factor - 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Impact Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lancet</td>
<td>168.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMJ</td>
<td>105.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMA</td>
<td>120.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEJM</td>
<td>158.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int'l Journal of Epidemiology</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American J of Epidemiology</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Diseases</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Article Influence Score & Eigenfactor Score

Article Influence Score: Average influence of a journal’s articles over 5 years. A score >1.0 indicates an above average influence

\[ AIS = \frac{0.01 \times \text{Eigenfactor Score}}{\text{# papers over 5 yrs for journal/ all papers over 5 yrs}} \]

Eigenfactor Score: Number of times articles from a journal are cited over 5 years, taking into account which journals cited the articles (highly cited journals contribute more weight than less cited journals); self-citations are removed.

Normalized Eigenfactor: Rescaled Eigenfactor such that an average journal = 1. A score of 5 indicates a journal has 5 times the influence as an average journal.

Choosing a journal

Match your paper to the journal
Understand the journal’s personality
Use your mentors and colleagues
And use this helpful resource:

https://jane.biosemantics.org/
Traditional or open access

Traditional publication:
Journals charge subscription fees, including libraries
- free to authors (usually)
- may be fees for figures, color figures/photos, extra pages
Readers must have subscription, individual or institutional

Open access:
Author pays fee for publication
Free to readers
Open access

Many excellent open access journals
- PLoS
- BMC

Beware of predatory open access journals
- Minimal review process
- Publish for profit, not for science
- Often use similar names to major journals (e.g. Epidemiology: Open Access)

Predatory open access journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Predatory Publishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices.

Common solicitations
Predators are quick!

Hi Dr. Gregory C Chang,

Thanksgiving is a day to give thanks for what we have, not to save a few to get more. “Be thankful for what we have”. I would like to personally thank you for all the support from the commencement of the day till now and I feel really proud to work with distinguished Researchers like you.

If you are really thankful, what you do is “Sharing”. On this occasion we are ready to share your valuable ideas, suggestions and contributions for my Journal that can put an edge over others. I feel pleasurable, if you can submit any kind of article for this coming issue only.

Once again I honestly thank you for being with us in all the success. Anticipate receiving from you soon.

Please sign up for the latest MedCrave articles and follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Sasha Connelly
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MedCrave Group
8 years excellence in publishing
USA |EUROPE | ASIA

Predators are quick! Predatory conferences!

2nd Global Virtual Conference on Nursing and Patient Safety
April 14-15, 2023 | Online Conference

Dear Dr. Gregory C. Chang,

Greetings from Nursing World 2023!!

The Organizing Committee of Nursing World Conference 2023 would like to kindly invite you as a Speaker with your Colleagues to participate and deliver an oral or poster presentation at the 2nd Global Virtual Conference on Nursing and Patient Safety to be held during April 14-15, 2023 as a Virtual conference with the Theme: Exploring the advanced practices in nursing & Patient Safety.

For more information, you can visit; https://nursing.researchermeetings.com/

Your participation and support will be greatly appreciated for our prestigious conference.

To book your speaker presentation slot, please submit your abstract for the presentation online; https://nursing.researchermeetings.com/abstract/

Waiting for your kind response.

Thanks & Regards,

Sandra Brown
Program Manager
Nursing World 2023
Wenlock Road, London, England, N1 7GU, UK
Phone: +44 7480723519
Email Id: nursinginfo@researchermeetings.com

16 warning signs of fake journals

1. Website: The journal’s website contains misleading or false information (e.g., indexing, metrics, membership of scholarly publishing organisations), lacks an ISSN or uses one that has already been assigned to another publication, mimics another journal/publisher’s site, or has no past or recent journal content.

2. Name of journal: The journal name is the same as or easily confused with that of another, scope, or association.

3. Peer review process: Peer review and peer review process and model are not mentioned, or manuscript acceptance or a very short peer review time is guaranteed. Submitted manuscripts receive inadequate or no peer review.

4. Ownership and management: Information about the ownership and/or management is missing, unclear, misleading, or false.
16 warning signs of fake journals

5. Governing body: Information on the editorial board is missing, misleading, false, or inappropriate for the journal; full names and affiliations of editorial board members are missing.

6. Editorial team/contact information: Full names and affiliations of the journal's editor/s and full contact information for the editorial office are missing, the editor-in-chief is also the owner/publisher, or the editor-in-chief is also the editor of many other journals, especially in unrelated fields.

7. Copyright and licensing: Policies and notices of copyright (and publishing licence and user licence) are missing or unclear.

8. Author fees: Mandatory fees for publication are not stated or not explained clearly on the journal website, submission system, or the letter of acknowledgement and/or are revealed only in the acceptance letter, as a condition of acceptance.

9. Process for identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct: There is no description on how cases of alleged misconduct are handled.

10. Publication ethics: There are no policies on publishing ethics (e.g., authorship/contributorship, data sharing and reproducibility, intellectual property, ethical oversight, conflicts of interest, corrections/retractions).

11. Publishing schedule: The periodicity of publication is not indicated and/or the publishing schedule appears erratic from the available journal content.

12. Access: The way(s) in which content is available to readers, and any associated costs, is not stated, and in some cases listed articles are not available at all.

13. Archiving: There is no electronic backup and preservation of access to journal content (despite such claims).

14. Revenue sources: Business models, business partnerships/agreements, or revenue sources are not stated; publishing fees or waiver status are linked to editorial decision making.

15. Advertising: Advertising policy is not given, or advertisements are linked to editorial decision making or are integrated with published content.

16. Direct marketing: Direct marketing is obtrusive and gives misleading or false information.

Avoiding predatory journals

Identify trustworthy journals through the Think.Check.Submit. campaign.

https://thinkchecksubmit.org/

Common barriers to submission

- Fear of rejection
  - Don’t let perfectionism interfere!
- Lack of confidence in writing skills
  - The perfect is the enemy of the good! - Voltaire
- Lack time
  - Your goal?
- Need for perfection
  - Good enough!

Maximizing publication success

- Clearly define your research question
- Tell a clear and compelling story
- Determine authorship early
- Choose your audience and journal carefully
- Follow the journal’s rules for manuscripts
- Understand the publication process
- Plan your time
- Know yourself and your work habits
- Plan on multiple drafts
- Share your work early (and often)
Common components of submission

- Cover letter
- Author list, affiliations, contact information
- Key words
- Abstract
- Manuscript text
- Figures
- Financial disclosures
- Copyright agreement

Cover letter

Brief statement to the editor
- Highlight importance of your work in 1 or 2 sentences, not more
- Identify 3-4 competent reviewers
- Generally, do not identify persons you want to exclude from possible reviewers
- Include any specific language the journal requires

Key words

Can be used to guide search engines
- You want your work to be found easily when people are looking for papers in your area

Choose your words carefully
- Include both broad (sensitive) and narrow (specific) terms
Abstract

Follow journals instructions for the abstract
- Structured versus not
- Word count

Remember the abstract is the most read part of any paper

Manuscript text

Double-spaced text is common

Follow formatting requirements, including references

Line numbers!!! Line numbers make the reviewer’s & editor’s jobs easier—you want their jobs to be easy!!!

Figures

Include complete figure legends – a description of the figure content
Avoid wasting space
- Limit bar graphs
Avoid three dimensional figures (e.g. pie charts)
Make the figures pretty → Do not use Excel defaults
Consider color versus gray scale
- If using gray scale, ensure sufficient discrimination
Typical journal structure

Manuscript processing

Manuscript processing
Manuscript processing - Revision

Manuscript resubmitted

Associate Editor reviews response

Peer reviewers assigned

Revise & resubmit

Reviewer recommends

Editor-in-Chief reviews response

Accept

Papers almost never accepted outright without revisions

Revise and resubmit is almost always a good thing

Reviews are intended to strengthen the science and enhance the manuscript quality

Reviews: What you don’t see

Reviews have two parts: comments for the authors and comments for the editors

Comments to the editor can be frank assessment of the paper
- occasionally may not reflect what the reviewer wrote in the comments for author
- may encourage re-review
- may indicate need for additional review, such as a statistical review
- may comment on the writing, grammar, structure
How do editors choose reviewers?

- Journals maintain databases of reviewers
  - reviewers’ areas of expertise are documented
  - some journals grade reviews
  - good reviewers are asked again

- Authors of papers previously published in the journal
- Reference lists from manuscript under consideration
- Pubmed searches on similar topics

Before you read that review...

- Put on your armor
- Be prepared for harsh and unkind words
- Try to separate your self from the science
- Remember the purpose of reviews: to improve the quality of the science and its communication

Responding to reviewers & editor

- Revise quickly
- Write for the editor and the reviewer
  - you do not know for sure whether it will go back out to the reviewers
- Be conciliatory in your tone. The reviewers are “right” to some extent, even when you disagree.
- Begin with a brief thank you to the reviewers.
  - You do not need to thank them for every comment.
  - Please don’t say “We agree” for (nearly) every comment.
Responding to reviewers & editors
Do all of the easy/moderate changes, even when you disagree (unless it really weakens paper)
Do the hard changes that will really strengthen paper
Resist the hard changes that will take too long, be too difficult, or will not improve paper
- Make a clear argument why you don’t want to make the change
- Often, additional language in discussion can be used instead of major additional analyses

One more time:
Tone and responsiveness are critical
A sure way to turn a “revise & resubmit” into reject is:
1) A tone that says, “I am smarter than you. How dare you criticize my work!”
2) Arguing or countering each point rather than making changes to the manuscript

The response is not a debate.
It is a document detailing substantive changes.

After reading the initial decision (revise & resubmit vs reject), wait before reading the reviews.
Let your emotions settle down
Wait until you’re cool, then read the reviews
Then give yourself another day, and only then develop your responses
Do not take reviews personally. Remember the goal is to advance the science and the reviews are intended to improve your paper, not be a critique of your abilities. It is not about you; it is about the science.
Structure of the response

Enumerate each issue raised by the reviewers
- copy word for word
- in the same order as the reviews: reviewer 1, reviewer 2, reviewer 3

Draft a response that highlights the changes made in the manuscript
- word for word if short; only point to place in text if long change

Shorten as necessary

Structure of the response - Intro

Authors Response

We appreciate the opportunity to revise our manuscript for consideration of publication in The Lancet. We have responded to every comment, from the editors and reviewers. Our original manuscript was over the word limit, at 5072 words. We have substantially reduced the words in the current version to 4997 words. To shorten the manuscript and also provide substantive changes in response to the reviewers, we have added three appendices, which provide additional details of the methods (Appendix A), the intervention manual (Appendix B), and supplemental results (Appendix C). Point-by-point responses are given below in italics.

Structure of the response – Small changes

Reviewer 1 (stats):
1) Was randomisation stratified by site or any other factor?
RESPONSE: Yes, randomisation was stratified by site. This has been clarified:

Line 101-102: “Index participants (“indexes”) were randomly assigned to either the SOC or intervention arms at a ratio of 3:1 (SOC:intervention). Randomization was stratified by site, and used a permuted-block design.”

2) By probability ratio, do the authors mean risk ratio, odds ratio or another formula? For example, in Stata, the log-linear binomial regression allows for odds ratio, risk ratio and risk difference so I am not sure what the probability ratio mean.
RESPONSE: To clarify, we use ART use as an example. probability ratio = P(A alive and on ART at x time/intervention)/P(A alive and on ART at x time/ SOC). Given that this describes a state, e.g. the proportion of persons who were using ART at a given point of time, the probability ratio is analogous to a prevalence ratio at the given point of time. The probability ratio is not a risk ratio (cumulative incidence ratio) because persons may have started ART and stopped by the time point used for the assessment. This has been clarified:

Line 222: “Probability ratios (PR), analogous to prevalence ratios at a specific time point, were used to compare...”
Structure of the response – Paragraph change

33) 3rd sentence: the way the sentence is written, it sounds like partners who were not HIV-infected were enrolled, but there were other reasons, listed in fig 1, that partners were not enrolled.
RESPONSE: We agree that it was confusing as written. We have revised the paragraph by making the references to the indexes sequential, which then makes the partner enrollment sequential. We have also made the partner section its own paragraph.

Structure of the response - decline

3) Scalable: The authors describe the intervention as scalable. Many sites around the world are working to scale up ART use and improve retention. This was a preparatory trial and there may not be sufficient data, but it would be helpful to know if specific navigation or counseling activities were associated with ART use and viral suppression and mortality and why the results were not as good in Indonesia. The authors report that participants in Ukraine and Vietnam used more psychosocial services than participants in Indonesia and Indonesians lived further from treatment centers [no distance from site data was presented in the results]. This question probably deserves more investigation and discussion.
RESPONSE: We agree that trying to identify the specific aspects of this intervention that appeared to be most important would be informative. However, the intervention was designed as a package, addressing barriers to ART and MAT uptake at both the system and individual levels. We did not pre-specify any analyses attempting to dissect the effect. We are currently in the planning phase for these analyses, and we intend to write a separate paper or papers that delve into this issue in some depth. Those analyses will take some time to do well, as we will examine the number and types of counseling sessions and navigator activities. At this time, we do not wish to speculate beyond the intervention package as a whole.

Structure of the response – previous change

11) The authors describe the intervention as flexible, integrated, and scalable. One example of flexibility is that different staff (i.e., clinicians, counselors, master-level staff) performed navigation/counseling activities at different sites and counseling sessions were meant to adjust based on client needs. If there are other examples of adjustments to participant navigation or the integration of the activities in routine practice that could be presented in the methods or results, that would be interesting.
RESPONSE: Please see response to Reviewer 2’s point #2 above.

33) 3rd sentence: the way the sentence is written, it sounds like partners who were not HIV-infected were enrolled, but there were other reasons, listed in fig 1, that partners were not enrolled.
RESPONSE: We agree that it was confusing as written. We have revised the paragraph by making the references to the indexes sequential, which then makes the partner enrollment sequential. We have also made the partner section its own paragraph.
Structure of the response - Alternative

9) Reviewers are asked to ‘comment on the extent to which you believe this submission can change practice or thinking’. The intervention (case management and counseling), as described in the methods, does not differ substantially from activities being implemented at HIV treatment sites around the world by governments and NGOs. The rigorous assessment of the outcomes, however, is a model of how programmatic data can be used to monitor and adjust activities aiming to increase the proportion of PLHIV on ART and virally suppressed.

RESPONSE: Thank you for this insightful and well-worded suggestions to our research in context section. We have added text to this section on lines 39-41 and 52-55.

My preference is against...

Reviewers are asked to ‘comment on the extent to which you believe this submission can change practice or thinking’. The intervention (case management and counseling), as described in the methods, does not differ substantially from activities being implemented at HIV treatment sites around the world by governments and NGOs. The rigorous assessment of the outcomes, however, is a model of how programmatic data can be used to monitor and adjust activities aiming to increase the proportion of PLHIV on ART and virally suppressed.

Some editors may really like this approach. I know many senior authors swear by it. I find it harder to follow.

Challenging rejections

You can occasionally challenge a rejection
- can occur at any stage (e.g. with or without review)
- can ask for a new “impartial” reviewer

You must have a compelling case: evidence that reviewer did not seem qualified or was biased

Be concise in your written request. The editor has many papers to deal with; you just have the one.

Respect the editor’s final decision.
After acceptance

Your paper may or may not be edited by a professional editor
- depends on the journal and their budget
- you have some, but not complete, control over changes made

You will receive galley proofs with these changes and with the article formatted for publication
- review the proofs very carefully
- make sure any editing has not changed the intended meaning
- answer any author queries completely

Purpose of journal peer review

Improve the quality of individual manuscripts
Improve the quality of published science
Improve journal quality
Educate and help authors
Advance knowledge

Your role as a reviewer

Part of your responsibility to the profession
- Reasonable rule of thumb: one submission to a journal merits a minimum of two reviews for that journal

Time-consuming, relatively thankless task

Early career investigators often provide better reviews than more established folks
Peer review

Peer review is based on a centuries’ old Western system
It is a system built by people of privilege, largely for other people of privilege
Sexism, racism, nationalism, epistemicide* enter the process too often
Poor reviews:
- silence new ideas
- leads to important work being shelved
- silence brilliant people
- delays authors’ advancement

Ideally, peer review = reflexive mentorship

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Peer review = reflexive mentorship

Recognize the importance of academic generosity, collegiality & collaboration
Tend carefully to precarious voices
Act as allies for community of scholars—encourage new ideas, hone existing ideas, strive for excellence

"Every review is a crucial historical event that offers a renewed opportunity to disrupt and democratize the existing canon."

Put simply: Be kind & constructive

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Qualities of a good reviewer

Review only papers you are qualified to review
- You can correspond with editor about your comfort level. She may still want your input
Inform editor about conflicts of interest. Ask editor if you are unsure.
Respond promptly to every query for review
- Better to say “no” right away, so the editor can find another reviewer

Do not:
1) Fail to indicate whether you will or will not review (a big waste of time!);
2) Fail to complete review after agreeing to do it.**

Provide a thoughtful & considerate review. **ARGH!!!

---
Steps for a good review

Read the paper once soon after you receive it
Jot a few notes
Let it ruminate; check out any questions it may have raised
Read again in 1-2 days. Jot down the key points
Give it another day and a final read, and write the review OR
Finish the review right after the second read

Qualities of a good review (1)

Objective assessment of the paper
Thorough, focus on the science
Consider the big picture; what does this paper add to our knowledge?
Does the paper confirm what we already know? Is that confirmation important?
Does the paper have a fatal flaw?
Have the authors conveyed that information clearly?
Limit your comments to the areas that you know about. Don’t provide comments outside your expertise
• if you don’t feel qualified, let the editor know early. Comment only on what you can.

Qualities of a good review (2)

Begin with positive (kind) statements**
Number comments; indicate page number & paragraph
Small explicit statements with clear explanations
Provide solutions to the problems raised, rather than just pointing them out
Group major comments and minor comments
Organize by most important first or by section—either can be effective

**BUT…
Don’t say it is well written when it is not
Or that it is important when it is not
Or that it is interesting when it is not

Be kind and constructive.
Phrase the comments like you would like to receive them.
Thoughtful review should touch on

- Importance of the study question
- Rigor of the scientific method
- Appropriateness of the approach/methods
- Contribution to the scientific literature
- Appropriateness of interpretation & conclusions
- Success of the manuscript in communicating to the reader

Editor’s & journal’s criteria

- Appropriateness of content for journal readership
- Originality and content
- Appropriateness of study design & methods
- Validity of conclusions
- Quality of writing

Editor’s considerations for revise & resubmit

- What needs to be done to make this publishable?
- Is the paper too long?
- Should the paper be a brief communication or research note?
Editor’s considerations with accept

Worthy of commentary or editorial?
- supportive or counterpoint by one of the reviewers?

Press release? Tweet?

Placement in the journal?

Becoming a reviewer

- Let editor know you are interested in reviewing
  - more likely to work with specialty journals
  - provide description of your expertise
Write what you know!
```
Thank you!!!
Bill Miller
bill_miller@unc.edu
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Rejection: An all-too-familiar experience
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