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# “HOW TO PUBLISH IN A HIGH IMPACT JOURNAL”

INVITED SPEAKER

**PROF. PHILIP J. ROSENTHAL**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE (AJTMH)

# March's plan 2021

3

Animal Lab  
and Animal EC

10

AJTMH

17

BSTM

24

CRCC

31

Elsevier  
(Eng ver.)

# THANK YOU

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK WITH  
**MAHIDOL-BSTM**  
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# How to Publish in a High Impact International Journal



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March 10, 2021

# Writing a paper- General advice

- Plan ahead- be thinking about how you will tell a story as you conduct the research
- Be flexible- be willing to change plans based on results and changing impressions as you prepare a manuscript
- Get lots of advice from mentors and senior colleagues
  - Advice on when and where to publish
  - Frequent editing by colleagues
- Be careful and professional
  - Typos, poor grammar, and sloppiness greatly decrease your chance of acceptance

# Why Should You Publish?

- The point of research is to communicate results with others
- Publications document your research success, enabling academic advancement

# When Should You Publish?

- It may be difficult to decide when to publish your results.
- Some scientific stories are much larger than others.
  - Multiple small reports vs one large story?
- Important considerations:
  - Urgency of communication of results
  - Completeness of story
  - Personal considerations (e.g. completion of MSc or PhD)

# Organizing the writing process

- Generally start with Results
- The Title is very important. Use this to focus your ideas and to advertise your paper.
- Early writing of an Abstract can be very helpful
- The Introduction helps you to better know the field and best present your results in the context of prior research
- Methods can be written at any time; these should allow any reader to be able to replicate your experiments.
- The Discussion should be written last, after the Results and Introduction are well developed.
- Other sections: References, Funding, Acknowledgments

# Results

- Generally start with Results
- Consider figures and tables that display key results
  - Rough figures and tables can be very helpful; it is fine to change these many times as the story is refined
  - Craft the text of the Results based on figures and tables; this can often be quite short
- Avoid excessive duplication between figures/tables and text
- Figure legends are important!

# Title

- The title is very important, but often not taken seriously
- Avoid jokes, jargon, abbreviations, questions
- Keep it short and clear
- Don't hide the punch line
- Use the title as an “advertisement” for your paper

## Bad Title:

Temporary depletion of complement component C3 or genetic deficiency of C1q significantly delays onset of scrapie

## Good Title:

Complement facilitates early prion pathogenesis

# Abstract

- Often has been written already for a meeting presentation or poster
- Very helpful to write this early, as it helps one to decide on the appropriate story
- Various formats- structured or a single paragraph
- Don't rush out the abstract at the last minute!

# Introduction

- Summarize the relevant literature
- Keep it short and focused. Usually 3-4 paragraphs or less.
- There is usually no need for very basic introduction.
- End the introduction with a brief mention of the research study (but don't extensively summarize the results).

# Methods

- Systematically summarize all aspects of the experimental methods
- Specific items are required for certain types of reports (e.g. sample size calculation for a clinical study)
- A reader should be able to fully replicate the experiments
- Data analysis section
- Address ethical concerns
- Make sure to acknowledge assistance from others

# Discussion

- This should be written last, after the Results and Introduction are nearly finished
- Start with an outline. What point should be communicated in each paragraph?
- First paragraph- full, short summary: Background; What you did; What you found; What it means
- Address points in paragraphs in order of importance
- Limitations paragraph
- End with a summary/recommendations paragraph.

# References

- Choose these carefully
- Usually select prominent papers
- Cite primary papers (rather than reviews) when possible
- Cite key groups in the field (so that reviewers are not mad at you)
- Follow correct formatting for the journal
- Do not be sloppy!

# Submission of a manuscript

- Cover letter
  - Very important?
  - Keep it short.
- On line submission- requires a lot of details
- Be careful
  - Typos in the on-line form are terrible!
  - Carefully review the final PDF

# What journal should you choose?

- Publishing in high impact journals brings prestige and increases readership
  - Is impact factor important?
- The higher you shoot, the more likely you will be disappointed
- Consider the journal audience and what topics the journal usually covers
- Consider the cost of publication (up to ~\$5000/ paper)
  - Open access?
  - For profit or not-for-profit?

# How to write well - I

- **Tell a story**
  - Emphasize key points. Focus!
  - What is your message?
  - Include a key take home point in your abstract and in the submission letter.
- **Keep it simple!**
  - Write for a fairly broad audience
- **Write well in English!**
  - Get help: colleagues, writing service, on-line writing tools

## How to write well - II

- Use the active voice when possible
- Short sentences are usually best
- Avoid overuse of jargon
- Avoid overuse of abbreviations
  - Spell out with first usage in both abstract and text
- Avoid typos!
- Scientific writing is a learned skill
  - Practice, practice, practice
  - Get repeated feedback from mentors and colleagues

# Reviews & How to Respond to Them

# The Peer Review Process

## Submission

Submission forms and processes vary from journal to journal, and may include an initial technical check prior to editorial review.

## Editorial Review & Triage

Triage processes vary from journal to journal but may include an initial high-level review by one or more editors prior to invitation of reviewers.

## Finding Reviewers & Peer Review

Most journals will secure 2-3 peer reviewers per manuscript, and processes for inviting reviewers vary by journal. Some journals maintain a review board and some do not.

## Who are those reviewers?

- Selected by EIC or Section Editors
- Often chosen from your list of suggested reviewers
  - Choose your reviewers carefully
- Other experts in the area
  - Known to the editor
  - Chosen from journal files
  - Chosen from PubMed
- It's often difficult to find reviewers!

## What do the reviewers do?

- Read the manuscript carefully (hopefully)
- Write a critique - level of detail varies greatly
- Fill out a form (every journal has a different system)
- Offer an opinion on suitability for publication
- Manuscripts are almost never accepted without revision

## What does the editor do?

- Review critiques from reviewers
  - These often disagree!
  - Some reviews are much better quality than others.
  - Editors may or may not read the manuscript fully.
- Reach a decision: Accept, Reconsider, Accept with revision, Reject

## How do you respond to a request for revision?

- You do not need to make all requested changes, but you must justify every response (with or without changes to the manuscript).
- Response letter: Consider every comment from the reviewers in a concise point-by-point manner.
- Edit the manuscript accordingly. Show all changes by stating location in the letter and/or highlighting on the revised manuscript.
- Make it easy for the editor to edit!
- Multiple rounds of revision may be needed.

## What if your manuscript is rejected?

- Welcome to the club!
- Consider the review comments seriously.
- Rework the manuscript.
  - Resubmit elsewhere with minor changes.
  - Rework the manuscript extensively and resubmit.
  - Add more results before resubmitting.
  - Give up?!? Maybe this report should not be published?

# Questions?

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE

**THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF  
TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE**  
Official Journal of the American Society of  
Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

Section	Page
<b>Original Articles</b>	
100	
101	
102	
103	
104	
105	
106	
107	
108	
109	
110	
111	
112	
113	
114	
115	
116	
117	
118	
119	
120	
121	
122	
123	
124	
125	
126	
127	
128	
129	
130	
131	
132	
133	
134	
135	
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137	
138	
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148	
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195	
196	
197	
198	
199	
200	