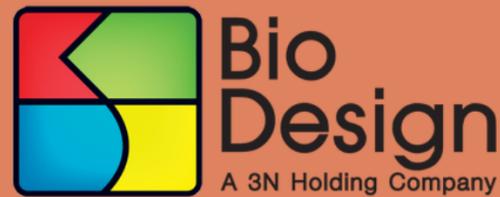


# WELCOME TO ORS Channel

ep.12

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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

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Animal Lab  
and Animal EC

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AJTMH

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BSTM

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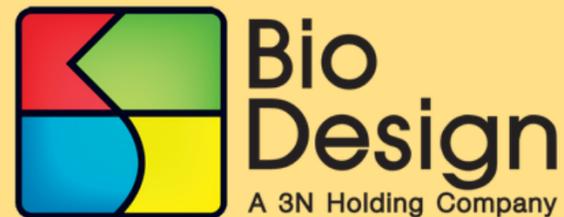
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Elsevier  
(Eng ver.)

# THANK YOU

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK WITH  
**MAHIDOL-BSTM**  
(MAHIDOL BANGKOK SCHOOL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE)

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# How to Publish in a High Impact International Journal



Phil Rosenthal

Editor in Chief, AJTMH

University of California, San Francisco

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?

**ASTMH**   
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

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