

Steps to Writing and Publication

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I. Get the Idea!

- What questions come up in your clinical practice?
- What do you find interesting?
- What have you presented on?
- What posters have you presented?
- What are you an expert on?
- What have you developed at work that has enhanced your practice?

II. Getting Started!

- Consider target journal and target audience
- Determine the objectives of paper –
 - Collaborative if multiple authors
 - Key findings/info that you want to target
- When and where?
 - When are you most creative?
 - When are you most productive?
 - Set aside days/hours for writing – put it on your calendar!!
- Gather your references, key publications
 - Develop outline or Plug into your outline/
 - Write on top of the articles key points
 - Highlight articles
- Develop outline
- **Check author instructions from targeted journal.**

III. Targeting a journal:

- Acceptance rates vary
- Time to publication varies
- Impact factor:
 - Average number of citations published from journal in last two years
- Journal of Citation Reports
 - http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/analytical/jcr/
 - Browse journals by subject
- Online journals
- Open-Access
- Journal guidelines will affect what and how you write
- What is your preferred audience?
- Has similar work been published? Where?
- Make a list
- Access likelihood of acceptance

- Rank journals in order of preference
- Get peer recommendations
- Balance high-impact journal with preferred time to publication

IV. Outlining

- Create your storyline
- Single-word topics or one liners
 - These become the “lead sentences”
- Create titles of tables/figures you might want to have

V. Write on!

- Start with outline topics
 - Develop lead sentence
- Build paragraphs (6-8 sentences from lead sentence)
- Further develop paragraph
 - Lead-in sentence
 - Transition sentence (to next paragraph)
- Introduce/describe tables with 1-3 sentences

VI. Tips for yourself:

- Set some obtainable goals
 - Will have references read by ____
 - Outline by ____
 - First section completed by ____
- Divide writing into manageable chunks that can be written in a two hour setting
- Avoid the distraction of FB, email, texts and Pinterest!
- Stop when you get stuck, STOP, allow time for reflection
- Take small 5-10 minute breaks – go to BR, get some coffee or juice, no big meals; have energy foods
- Reward yourself!

VII. Title and Abstract

- Most important part of paper
 - Scanned by editor, readers, reviewers, electronic databases,
 - In PubMed, similarity between documents:
 - Measured by words in common
 - Terms in title are given more weight
 - Sometimes author instructions will have certain requirements
- Title:
 - Important keywords at beginning of title
 - No abbreviations

- No use of passive voice
- Informative or descriptive title?
- Include what makes paper unique in title
- Characteristics of highly cited articles:
 - More words in title
 - Use of words cancer, randomized, trial, survival, expression, prognosis
 - Use of acronyms
 - Title structured with two phrases or sentences
 - Published in generalist journal
- Abstract

VIII. Introduction:

- **Will my introduction “Sell” my paper?**
- Often short and focused
- Give reader essential information to understand why this manuscript is needed
- Gives context
 - Summarizes relevant literature to date
 - Gives current views on subject
 - Tailored to selected journal
- No more than 10-15% of full word count
- Take outline’s lead sentences and develop into 4-5 paragraphs
- General background
 - Magnitude of problem/societal burden
 - What is known about problem/what is unknown
 - Gaps in literature
 - Why information in paper is needed/important
 - Problem statement
- Should connect with discussion but not overlap
- Final paragraph should attract readers attention

IX. Tips for writing syntax

- Clear, clean unemotional language
- Use active verbs
- Present tense for established facts
- Past tense or present perfects for findings you do not consider established
- Back up important statements with a reference

X. Body of manuscript:

- Clear, concise, objective
- Findings without interpretation
- Refer to tables/figures with highlights described in 1-3 sentences.

- Anticipate questions your readers might have
- Caution with strong words like “prove”

XI. Plagiarism

- “Just because you wrote it doesn’t mean you can quote it!” – Self-Plagiarism
- Plagiarism check websites:
 - www.ithenticate.com (\$)
 - <http://www.duplichecker.com> (Free, max 1500 words)
 - <http://www.plagium.com> (Free, max 25,000 characters)
 - <http://www.articlechecker.com>

XII. Conclusion/Discussion

- What is the “bottom-line” of your paper?
- Think of the conclusion or discussion section as an inverted funnel:
- Summary of main findings, compare information to what else if reported in literature – answers questions what did I find?
- Tells what is known, new findings, how does it find it with current knowledge?
- Interpretation could include strengths/weaknesses/limitations, Are findings true? Important?
- Implications for clinical practice and or recommendations for need for further research. What do we do with information as a clinician? How is it relevant?
- Should not present new information
- Main findings in no more than 3 sentences
- Acknowledge limitations
- Stress important this manuscript adds to literature
- Implications – clinical – how will an AP use this information?
- Give a clear ending to the storyline
 - Citable statement
 - Make a clear, concise “bottom-line” of the paper

XIII. Figures/Tables

- Can provide lots of information easily
- Present key findings
- Readers will look at these to get an idea of what your manuscript is about
- Must be self-explanatory
- Know if there are journal limitations to number of tables/figures
- Design carefully, easy to read/follow
- Must be self-explanatory – reader should be able to fully understand the information without having to read the text.
- If there is a limited number of tables/figures (often could be around 5-6) - May be able to present more information in supplemental web resources.

- Design these carefully, clear layout
- Should have clear relation with text
- Chronological order
- Table –
 - title at top
 - Horizontal lines to mark top and bottom
 - Use landscape format for wide table
- Figure – title at bottom
- **Know journal specifications:**
 - Some journals require tables/figures be submitted in separate files
 - Some journals require tables/figures to be saved in a specific format (JPEG, PNG, etc)
- Do not use if information can be easily put into text
- Informative title
- Don't repeat information in text
- DO stress most important table/figure information in text

XIV. References

- Used to back up important statements
- Use primary source of original data
- Only uses truly relevant references:
 - Select MOST relevant ones
 - More not always better
- Use relevant references from your targeted journal
- Most common medical reference styles:
 - APA style
 - Vancouver style
- Don't cite widely established facts
- **Know journal specifications:**
 - Some journals limit number of references
 - Know targeted journal instructions for references and stick to it
- When having to choose between references:
 - Choose reference with highest level of evidence
 - Open-access available
 - Most recent
 - Published in targeted journal
- **Check and double check before submission**

XV. Authorship

- Order of importance
 - First author, Last author, Second author
- Some journals ask for a “guarantor”
 - Takes responsibility for integrity of the work as a whole, from inception to publication.

- Corresponding author
 - Contact person for questions, etc.
- Make this clear up front
- Lead author:
 - Requires planning
 - Prepares primary draft with input from co-authors
 - Gives team expectations/feedback
 - Sets deadlines
 - Ensures manuscript is ready for submission
- Conflict of interest disclosures
 - Essential to enhance transparency and credibility in medical publishing

XVI. Submission

- Each journal has its own specific requirements
 - Found in author instructions on journal's web site
 - Know early in your writing
- Cover letter
 - Stress significance of paper
 - Relevance to specific journal
 - Confirm adherence to journals author requirements
 - Additional info that might interest editor
 - Opportunity to "sell" your manuscript
- Cover letter should include:
 - Your request to submit the paper – using its title
 - Summary of significance of paper in 2-3 sentences
 - Relevant problems it addresses
 - Main findings
 - Why it is important
 - Statement of relevance to journal's audience
 - Any other information required by journal
 - Template in Chipperfield reference

XVII. Final Checklist:

- Read it one last time – beginning to end
- Ask yourself:
 - Is story line clear, logical, interesting?
 - Is it concise?
 - Is it consistent?
 - Are there ZERO typos?
- Ensure you have met ALL journal specific requirements
- Check and recheck and check references again
- Consider having a trusted colleague proofread
- Write cover letter

- May need to suggest 2-3 potential reviewers
- Online submission will guide you through process
 - Usually takes at least an hour to submit
- Monitor status of submission regularly
 - Follow-up if you have not heard from journal in 2-3 months

XVIII. Resources:

- Get a mentor
- Class Reference List, handouts
- Directory of Open Access journals: <http://www.doaj.org>
- PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>
- Kotz, D. & Cals, J.'s articles
- Table of elements of articles: Sullivan reference
- Template of cover letter: Chipperfield reference
- Hints on what reviewers will be looking for and how to review an article: Annesley reference

End Notes

Have PASSION about your topic!

Best topic is the one that interests YOU

Look at patients, cases, tumor boards, interesting radiological studies or laboratory findings and build from there

Try to find an original slant to make the paper more appealing to your readership

Enlist a co-author

Start small

Best beginning project

Book chapter or newsletter

Query medical websites for writing projects

Guest editorials

Case study presentations

Keep a camera with you at all times in your practice setting

Write, write, write!!

Writing for sponsored studies

Fraught with danger

Some journals won't accept papers where authors have received honoraria

Ghost writers often write the entire paper but use the clinician's name as author

Make sure you write the first draft if you decide to do this and acknowledge any editorial help

Reviewer Input

Reviewers can be your best friend

Pay attention to their input; they can help you salvage a manuscript and get it into publishing shape

Join review boards once published

Peer review is publication's gold standard

Writing for JADPRO

Reviews

Series reviews

Prescriber's corner

Translating research into practice

Practice matters

Diagnostic snapshot

Grand rounds

Information for Contributors

The *Journal of the Advanced Practitioner in Oncology (JADPRO)* is a bimonthly, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to addressing the multifaceted aspects of care provided by advanced practitioners involved in the management of patients with cancer. The aim of this journal is to provide the most recent clinical, scientific, and professional information available to the advanced practitioner audience.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts are considered for publication in *JADPRO*. Manuscripts will be accepted for review if the content has not previously been published and is not currently under consideration for publication in another journal. Articles following previously presented material may be submitted with an accompanying descriptive statement. The decision to publish any type of article is the sole responsibility of the Editors.

All articles are to be submitted electronically in manuscript format as indicated by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 6th ed. All manuscripts should be double-spaced in 12 pt font. All articles are to be accompanied by a title page, as well as keywords. Review articles must include an abstract summarizing the content and implications of the article. Both generic and trade names of pharmaceuticals should be provided. On first mention of the generic name, include the trade name in parentheses. Thereafter the generic name should be used.

TITLE PAGE

Title page should include a specific, brief title; full names of all authors in order; primary affiliations; and academic and clinical appointments. Contact information for the primary author should be provided, including city, state, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address. This information will be used for correspondence between the author and editors during the submission and peer review process.

REFERENCES

Articles must be well-referenced with references cited at least once in text and listed alphabetically at the end of the manuscript according to APA format. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all references. References should include doi numbers whenever available.

TABLES, FIGURES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Authors are encouraged to include tables, figures, photos, illustrations, and artwork to elaborate on or emphasize key concepts, and to add visual interest. All tables, figures, photos, and illustrations should be submitted at the end of the manuscript, each on a separate page, and numbered consecutively

as they appear in text. Tables, figures, and illustrations must be accompanied by a comprehensive, explanatory caption. Figures should be high-resolution (300 dpi) .jpg, .tiff, or .eps files, and may be in black-and-white or color.

PERMISSIONS

If previously published or copyrighted non-original material or photographs of subjects are to be included, permissions for print and online use must be provided at the time of manuscript submission. Permissions must be granted with signatures from an entity with authority to grant said permission.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Financial disclosure is required for all articles. All potential sources of bias or conflict of interest, including relationships such as those of consultants and speaker bureaus, must be identified in the interest of transparency to the readership. You will be prompted to download and complete the required form during the article submission process (see below).

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Articles should be submitted through our online submission platform hosted by ScholarOne. Go to <http://www.advancedpractitioner.com/submissions/> and click on the blue SUBMIT button. The journal will contact the primary author of the manuscript to acknowledge receipt of the submission. An abstract may be submitted to the journal via email to editor@advancedpractitioner.com for editorial response to topic or concept for potential future submissions.

PEER REVIEW

All articles submitted to *JADPRO* will initially be reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editors. Acceptance is based on relevance and originality. All manuscripts will undergo a double-blind peer review by two or more reviewers. Articles will be reviewed for key concepts such as topic relevance, importance to the field of oncology, appropriateness of content for the advanced practitioner, originality, quality and completeness of work, clarity, and the priority of the work to *JADPRO* and its readership.

TYPES OF ARTICLES

All word counts are exclusive of abstracts, figures, illustrations, photos, and references.

Review articles: Review articles are approximately 3000–4500 words (10–15 pages). Review articles must include an abstract of approximately 150–200 words. Review articles should be comprehensive and include an introduction and discussion. Certain review articles may also be published as a part of a series of review articles within an ongoing topic.

Grand Rounds: Grand Rounds articles are approximately 1500–2400 words (5–8

pages). A Grand Rounds article is a shorter but complete review article with a relevant, interwoven case study describing the patient by demographics, current issues and diagnoses, treatments, interventions, general course of action, and outcomes. Grand Rounds articles should include a discussion. All patient information should be de-identified to protect patient anonymity.

Practice Matters: Practice Matters articles are approximately 1000–1500 words (3–5 pages). Articles for this feature may highlight an advanced practitioner in clinical practice or topics pertinent to the clinical practice or professional development of advanced practitioners. For example, an article might feature a discussion of legislative issues pertinent to advanced practitioners or new programs instituted in practice to assist the advanced practitioner.

Prescriber's Corner: Prescriber's Corner articles are generally 1000–1500 words (3–5 pages). The article is intended to review a class of drugs or provide a single drug update. The article features a drug or treatment, providing information relevant to the advanced practitioner as prescriber and provider. It should provide a comprehensive review of a pharmaceutical relevant to oncology care, including drug class, indications, action, pertinent studies, method of administration, side effects, and implications for the advanced practitioner.

Diagnostic Snapshot: Diagnostic Snapshot articles are generally 700 words (2 pages) focusing on a chief complaint. An image (i.e., photo, figure) is required. The article includes history, chief complaint, physical exam findings, differential diagnosis, and work-up. The reader is asked to guess the patient's diagnosis through a multiple choice quiz with four possible answers; rationales are provided for both correct and incorrect answers.

Tools & Technology: An article for this feature is typically 500–1000 words (2–3 pages). The article highlights or reviews current or upcoming electronic tools, software, devices, and platforms that may be of use as a resource to the advanced practitioner in practice. Articles might include an overview of options in technology that may enhance clinical practice or professional development.

Translating Research into Practice (TRIP): TRIP feature articles are generally 1500–2000 words (5–7 pages), focusing on reviews and critical appraisals of pertinent research, including research whose findings have yet to be implemented in clinical practice, and information on research methodology and practice.

Letters to the Editor and Commentaries: Readers are encouraged to share their thoughts on issues relevant to the advanced practitioner community. Letters to the Editor and Commentaries should be sent to editor@advancedpractitioner.com.

So You Want to Write for JADPRO?

How to Get Started

- I. Pick an idea
 - a. Could be a particular idea for a specific feature of *JADPRO*
 - b. Can be a full review paper (which is really a state-of-the-art paper about a specific topic)
 - c. Should be something you have a lot of knowledge or feel passionate about
 - d. Can be an interesting patient or case you'd like to share with readers
 - e. If you've prepared a lecture for a symposium, use that work to develop a paper; you've already done most of the work!
 - f. Consider working with a mentor, co-author, or fellow colleague with writing experience
- II. Do a literature review
 - a. Obtain pertinent papers on the topic
 - b. Use literature databases such as CINAHL, PubMed, NLM, and Cochrane Database
 - c. Use Google Scholar
 - d. Take advantage of hospital libraries
 - e. Search your topic by keywords such as "survivorship issues IN colorectal cancer"
 - f. Consider online sources that have access to full free text articles, such as www.OncologySTAT.com, www.doaj.org, or www.freemedicaljournals.com
- III. Make an outline (if working with coauthors, consider splitting up content areas)
 - a. Abstract
 - b. Introduction
 - c. Scope of problem
 - d. Case presentation (if using a case)
 - e. Discussion/management
 - f. Implications for the advanced practice clinician
 - g. Conclusion
- VI. Gather references: Use APA 6th edition style
- VII. Submit the article
 - a. Consider a query letter
 - b. With blind peer review process, expect response to paper within 4 to 8 weeks
 - c. Welcome comments from reviewers, revise as necessary. Revisions are common and expected.

Key Contacts at JADPRO

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Scholarly Writing: Your Professional Legacy

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As humans, we all want to leave our mark on this earth. In our professional lives, the same is true. What inheritance are you leaving those who will come after you? What part of your collective wisdom and knowledge are you sharing with the young people in your profession? One way to mentor many individuals at the same time is by scholarly writing. The editors of the *Journal of the Advanced Practitioner in Oncology (JADPRO)* are committed to mentoring fledgling writers. We want to share our passion for both oncology and writing about oncology.

Scholarly writing promotes the profession as well as disseminates opportune information that will promote positive health-care outcomes. Through scholarly writing, you can share expert knowledge with your colleagues. It can also be a way to advance your career in many job settings. Many of us find that it gives us a feeling of personal satisfaction and accomplishment.

Getting Started

Starting your article is often the hardest part of scholarly writing. If you have never written before, writing for a newsletter (such as for special interest groups of the Oncology Nursing Society and the American Academy of Physician Assistants) or a local newspaper is a great way to get your feet wet (Winslow,

2008). Perhaps your hospital or facility has a periodic publication that needs authors. Writing a letter to the editor on a current published topic will allow you to express your opinion or perhaps offer a different perspective on the topic. Many professional journals publish book reviews, just a few short paragraphs about a book that the readers would find interesting. If you have recently given an oral presentation, this could be converted into a manuscript—and you have already done the legwork! Generally a 30-minute lecture will convert to about 20 double-spaced typed manuscript pages (Loos, 1996).

Some authors are daunted by the publication style required by the journal. It is important to know what style the journal to which you are submitting uses. Each journal will have “Author Guidelines” or “Information for Authors” noted in the journal as well as on their website. For example, *JADPRO* adheres to the sixth edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) style manual (APA, 2010). An earlier *Tools and Technology* column entitled, “Writing for Publication: References Made Easier,” gave several suggestions for programs that assist in formatting manuscripts in various publication styles (Vogel & Viale, 2010).

Mentorship

Working with a mentor can be rewarding as well as beneficial. To further an effective

mentoring relationship, know your topic thoroughly, meet established deadlines, and be amenable to constructive criticism (Winslow, 2008). A mentor can help a new author strategize their approach to writing and provide guidance on the structure of a potential paper for publication (Tariman, 2009). Expect to have several rewrites. Writing is an acquired skill and even the most experienced writers can benefit from a critique of their work (Tariman, 2009).

Deciding on a Topic

Pick an idea that you are passionate about. After all, you are going to be researching and living with this topic during the entire writing process. You might examine a challenge you faced in the clinical arena and discuss how you solved it. You could focus on a unique and interesting patient case. Or perhaps you are interested in learning more about a certain topic. Development of an outline can assist the author in determining the content areas for a scholarly paper (Dixon, 2001). Organizing your paper into distinct sections can help keep you on track. Content sections may vary; however, the usual progression for a paper includes an introduction, scope of the problem or idea to be discussed, the literature review, implications for nursing practice, and a conclusion. Manuscripts may present original research or a review

paper containing a discussion of updates in clinical practice (Oermann, 1999). Reading your paper out loud to yourself or colleagues can assist the author in determining sentence flow.

Some authors will choose to approach an editor with an idea to query their interest before beginning the research and writing process. Others will write first, and then send the manuscript to an editor. It is important to remember that while multiple queries can be sent to various journal editors simultaneously, manuscripts may be presented to only one journal at a time.

Once the manuscript has been submitted, it will go through a review process if the journal editor considers it appropriate for the journal (Sylvia & Herbel, 2001). In peer-reviewed journals like *JADPRO*, the paper is sent blinded to an oncology professional with knowledge about the topic for evaluation. The peer-reviewers will evaluate the manuscript for its appropriateness for the journal, the evidence base, and the value the paper will add to current literature. The reviewers will also examine organization, writing style, quality of references, gaps or deficits, and any unnecessary information. The manuscript will be returned to the author with acceptance, acceptance with suggested revisions, or rejection. Rejection is usually given with a rationale and comments. Critiques given

by peer-reviewers are used to revise the manuscript.

Responsibility for the final product will belong to you as the author. Writing is a choice and takes time and you must make the time to get it accomplished. Plan dedicated time during each week to write. Schedule your writing at times when you are at your most productive and creative modes. Some authors find that breaking a manuscript into segments and assigning a due date to each segment will keep them on target.

Helpful Resources

There are many useful articles and books about writing for publication. The references for this article represent some that are available. There are government-sponsored medical literature databases listed in Table 1 to assist in a literature search. There are also medical information databases that provide the latest information, expert commentaries, links to drug information, and continuing education (Table 2). Many of these sites are accessible via a mobile device. Table 3 lists selected useful online sites for authors. Tables 1, 2, and 3 appear back-to-back at the end of this article so you can tear out the page and save it for easy reference.

JADPRO is committed to mentoring new writers and recognizes that advanced oncology practitioners have a wealth of knowledge to share with their

colleagues. This sharing process, provided in part by the publication of your work, is integral to bettering our practice. Our goal is to make the writing process more attainable for the advanced practitioner, both by mentorship and by publishing tools that can increase your chances of publishing success. So start writing! We want to hear from you!

Ms. Vogel is an oncology nurse practitioner, Kingsport Hematology Oncology Associates, Kingsport, Tennessee; and Ms. Viale is an oncology nurse practitioner and nursing consultant, Goleta, California.

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Table 1. Searchable Medical Databases

Database	Website	Comments
CDC	www.cdc.gov	Part of the NIH; offers email updates, podcasts, and RSS feeds
FDA	www.fda.gov	Information on food, drugs, medical devices, vaccines, cosmetics, tobacco, and radiation-emitting products
Medline	www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/	NLM electronic database; gives citation/abstracts for life science journal articles, particularly biomedicine
National Center for Health Statistics	www.cdc.gov/nchs	Part of the CDC
NIH	www.nih.gov	Multimedia information: radio, video, podcasts, newsletters, and RSS feeds
NLM gateway	http://gateway.nlm.nih.gov/gw/Cmd	Broader scope than PubMed covering journals, books, serials, and nonprint media of NLM collection

Note. NLM = National Library of Medicine; NIH = National Institutes of Health; CDC = Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; FDA = Food and Drug Administration.

Table 2. Online Resources for Medical Authors

Database	Website	Comments
BioMed Central	www.biomedcentral.com	Open access publisher of 212 peer-reviewed journals
CancerNetwork	www.cancernetwork.com	Free registration allows access to full text publications, <i>ONCOLOGY</i> and <i>ONCOLOGY: Nurse Edition</i> as well as the <i>Cancer Management Handbook</i>
Directory of Open Access Journals	www.doaj.org	Listing and links to over 6,198 free, full-text journals online
eMedicine	www.emedicine.medscape.com	Open access database with articles on 7,000 diseases and disorders; latest practice guidelines in 59 specialties; search box for medical images
BNET	www.findarticles.com	Searchable database for articles in journals, newspapers, magazines for health, business, technology, and lifestyle
Free Medical Journals	www.freemedicaljournals.com	Free medical literature service; includes journals, books, and podcasts
Google	www.google.com and www.google.com/scholar	Search engine for research on scientific and nursing information; can provide current snapshot on many topics; Google Scholar contains full text articles and book chapters on selected topics
MedicineNet.com	http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/hp.asp	Aimed at consumers; understandable medical information written by US physicians
MedPix	http://rad.usuhs.edu/medpix/parent.php3?mode=default	Free online medical image database
Medscape	www.medscape.com	News, conference information, continuing education; resource centers on various cancers, nurse practitioners, among other topics; specialty sites for hematology and oncology
OncologySTAT	www.oncologystat.com	Identifies the latest, most important articles in oncology; provides abstracts and free full access to selected journals after registration

Table 3. Useful Websites for Medical Authors

Database	Website	Comments
Adobe Reader	www.adobe.com	Free download for Adobe Reader X (10.1)
Bartleby.com	www.bartleby.com	Dictionaries, thesauri, <i>Gray's Anatomy</i> , and other useful references
Citing Medicine	http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/formats/recommendedformats.html	National Library of Medicine Style Guide for authors, editors, and publishers
Equator Network	www.equator-network.org	International resource supporting good reporting of health research; contains information for editors and peer reviewers
Merriam-Webster Dictionary	www.merriam-webster.com	Online medical dictionary
National Academies Press	www.nap.edu/books	Free NAP science, nutrition, and medical books online
NCI Dictionary of Cancer Terms	www.cancer.gov/dictionary	Online dictionary of cancer terms
Nurse Author & Editor	www.nurseauthoreditor.com	International publication for nurse authors, editors, and reviewers (free registration)
NursingWriting	www.nursingwriting.wordpress.com	Blog on scholarly writing and links to writing resources
OneLook	www.onelook.com	Online, searchable portal of every kind and type of dictionary including general, computing, science, technology, and medicine
Online Books	www.digital.library.upenn.edu	University of Pennsylvania's Online Books page
OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab	http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/	Online writing lab at Purdue University which contains information on general writing, research, and citation (APA Style) to assist writers of any skill level
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association	www.apastyle.org	Online tutorials, frequently asked questions, other resources
Taber's Medical Dictionary	www.tabers.com	Online medical dictionary
University of Toledo	http://mulford.meduohio.edu/instr/	Links to author guidelines for over 6,000 journals in the health and life sciences
US Copyright Office	www.copyright.gov	Contains comprehensive information on copyright law
Vanguard	www.vanguard.edu/emplibary/files/proposal.pdf	Example of an undergraduate research proposal
WhoNamedIt?	www.whonamedit.com	An online, searchable dictionary of medical eponyms
WordsCount	www.wordscount.info	Contains the SMOG reading level calculator; can calculate up to 15,000 words of text

Writing for Publication: References Made Easier

WENDY H. VOGEL, MSN, FNP, AOCNP® and PAMELA HALLQUIST VIALE, RN, MS, CS, ANP, AOCNP®

Writing for publication can be a daunting process. Advanced practice clinicians have clinical experiences and knowledge that are invaluable to a reader, but the technicalities of writing can frequently be a significant barrier. The mechanics of working with bibliographies and interpreting various writing styles can be overwhelming, which only adds to a new writer's stress level. While there are thousands of reference styles available to potential authors, the American Psychological Association (APA) and American Medical Association (AMA) styles are among the most commonly used in medicine and nursing. In fact, the APA has just released the 6th edition of its Publication Manual (APA, 2009), which is the style used in this journal.

There are some significant changes in the 6th edition of the APA manual, including the addition of a digital object identifier (DOI) at the end of a reference when available. A DOI is a unique alphanumeric string assigned by the International DOI Foundation to assist in content identification and to provide a link to its location on the Internet. DOI numbers are static links; they never change and may be used to link permanently to electronic documents. Examples of a DOI may be examined in reference listings from articles in this issue.

Reference management software is designed to make the citation of references and creation of bibliographies easier. Some of these tools are web-based, others are network versions, and still others are desktop software. These programs facilitate a writer's ability to search, download, store, and organize any type of reference material. Some programs will allow you to "cite while you write"—that is, to insert citations and create the bibliography and figure list as one writes. They can save the writer many hours of valuable time and can be used for writing curricula vitae, manuscripts, theses/dissertations, grant proposals, term papers, and many other publications.

This edition of *Tools and Technology* highlights select software packages and Web sites that offer assistance in the citing of references and creation of bibliographies for publications. The list below is not all-inclusive, but instead selects several programs popular with writers. When choosing a reference management software program, consider the operating systems interface, ease of use and learning curve, available writing styles, import filters, database limitations, cost, and features such as EndNote®'s Cite While You Write™. We recommend viewing online demos and taking advantage of free trials. Plan some time to become familiar with your new software before beginning to write.

ENDNOTE® (WINDOWS/MAC OS X)

EndNote® is an all-in-one tool that allows users to integrate multiple tasks into a single program, including search of online bibliographic databases; organization of references, images, PDFs and other files; Cite While You Write™; and collaboration with EndNote® Web, a web-based research and writing component of EndNote®. It includes more than 3,700 bibliographic styles, including APA 6th edition and AMA. Free EndNote® tutorials and webinars are available online.

Free 30 day trial; full version and individual license (\$249.95); upgrades (\$99.95). Special offers available for universities and students. Visit <http://www.endnote.com> for more information.

NOODLEBIB (WINDOWS/MAC OS X)

NoodleBib is a comprehensive web-based program that allows users to search intelligently while critically assessing the quality of results. With this tool, users are able to record, organize, and synthesize information with online note cards and then format their bibliography in MLA, APA, or Chicago/Turabian style. NoodleBib provides help for each citation element when needed, and generates parenthetical references as the user writes. Students and teachers can share working bibliographies, and information can be exported into Microsoft Word.

The Web site offers several free software tools, including NoodleBib Express for one or two quick citations instead of a saved source list.

Individual or institutional subscription available; monthly individual subscriptions (\$4.00–\$8.00). Visit <http://www.noodletools.com> for more information.

BOOKENDS (MAC OS X)

Bookends provides writers with comprehensive reference management. It aids in the collection, annotation, and citation of published information by performing Internet searches to retrieve references. It also can immediately extract references from PDFs. A stand-alone lightweight version of Bookends' online search is available at no cost in Reference Miner, which allows exploration of PubMed, Library of Congress, Google Scholar, and Amazon. Using the PubMed On Tap application (available for purchase on the iTunes App Store), users are able to import references and PDFs found on their iPhone or iPod Touch devices into the Bookends database. Bookends is only available in Mac format.

Free demo with 50 reference limit; single user purchase (\$99.00); student rate available. Additional charge for updates and assorted fee structures. Visit <http://www.sonnysoftware.com> for more information.

SCHOLARWORD (WINDOWS, MAC OS X, MAC CLASSIC, AND LINUX)

This program is a comprehensive writing guide and formatting software for academic writing. It will format an entire

paper according to any of the leading style manuals (MLA, APA, Chicago, or Council of Style Editors). Software for APA will format a cover page and all of the citations according to the 5th edition (6th edition not yet available) of the APA Publication Manual. ScholarWord supports citations from books, periodicals, print and nonprint sources, as well as Internet sources.

Free 7 day trial and online demo available; ScholarWord single style (APA) edition (\$29.95); ScholarWord Pro (\$49.95). Visit <http://scholarword.com> for more information.

REFWORKS (WINDOWS, MAC OS X, UNIX, AND LINUX)

RefWorks is a web-based tool for research management. It serves as a writing and collaboration tool to assist in the collection, management, storage, and sharing of all types of information. The program's Write-N-Cite feature allows citations and bibliographies to be generated as you write. With RefWorks, references can be imported quickly and easily from most major online database services, other bibliographic software packages, RSS Feeds, web pages, and library catalogs. RefWorks supports hundreds of output styles, including APA (6th edition) and AMA. Tutorials and webinars are available.

Free 30 day trial and online demo available; yearly subscription (\$100). Visit <http://www.refworks.com> for more information.

FREWARE

Reference management freeware is also available. These generally have fewer features and vary in ease of use. An Internet

search of reference or bibliography management software will find the following resources, and many more.

- BibDesk (Mac OS X): <http://bibdesk.sourceforge.net>
- CiteULike: <http://www.citeulike.org>
- Connotea: <http://www.connotea.org>
- Scholar's Aid: <http://www.scholarsaid.com>
- Zotero: <http://www.zotero.org>

As noted earlier, the 6th edition of the APA Publication Manual added the requirement of a DOI at the ending of a reference if available. CrossRef (<http://www.crossref.org/>) is another handy resource to utilize. This Web site will locate DOIs for your references. You can also turn a DOI string into a URL. CrossRef is the official DOI link registration agency for scholarly and professional publications, covering millions of articles and other content items from several hundred publishers.

We know that advanced practitioners are a valued source of knowledge and clinical skills, and it is our hope that these tools will make writing for publication less difficult. Sharing this knowledge through publication not only assists other practitioners in care delivery, but it also highlights and legitimizes the advanced practitioner professions. Ready? Set... WRITE!

Are there topics you would like to see addressed in the Tools & Technology section? We'd like to hear from you! Please send your suggestions to editor@advancedpractitioner.com.

Avoiding Plagiarism in Professional Writing

by PAMELA HALLQUIST VIALE, RN, MS, CS, ANP, AOCNP®



Writing for publication is an excellent way to communicate your ideas and knowledge to other readers. Publishing in the *Journal of the Advanced Practitioner in Oncology (JADPRO)* offers potential authors a venue to convey information in a variety of ways, including case studies, review articles on oncology subjects and advanced practice, commentary on unique issues affecting advanced practitioners, or discussions of new pharmaceutical agents. However, all potential authors must be sure that contributions to *JADPRO* or any publication contain accurate, well-referenced information and that the paper is written in a professional manner. Avoiding plagiarism is a critical part of the professional approach to writing for scientific publication.

What Constitutes Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the act of taking another's work or ideas and presenting them as your own (Cicutto, 2008). Although it may occur because of an author's lack of understanding regarding what constitutes plagiarism, it is a serious concern in medical publishing. The policy of the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity (ORI) is very clear: The ORI believes plagiarism is the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and a significant copying of another's work without appropriate attribution (ORI, 2012).

There are several types of plagiarism. First, the most common form of plagiarism occurs when an author recreates sentences or paragraphs that are essentially identical to another's published work and does not acknowledge or reference the material (Das & Panjabi, 2011). Second, plagiarism of ideas may occur when an author takes an idea from someone else and passes it off as his or her own. An example of this might be an idea "stolen" from another professional pre-

senting an idea at a conference or symposium (Das & Panjabi, 2011). In another scenario, a reviewer for a journal might read a paper that ends up not being accepted for publication. If the reviewer “adopts” the paper’s main idea and publishes something similar on the topic, that is plagiarism (Das & Panjabi, 2011). A third form of plagiarism is self-plagiarism, in which an author publishes duplicate forms of his or her own originally published paper, containing redundant information or repeat study results (Cicutto, 2008).

While I was in nursing school, a fellow student submitted her thesis based on respiratory function; it was later discovered that she had essentially turned in an entire chapter from a well-respected nursing textbook. The professor excused the student partly based on the fact that a lack of understanding of publication ethics existed and that the plagiarism was unintentional; the professor also ruefully noted that she had given the chapter a grade of B-! The student had to submit a new paper, which might be considered an extremely forgiving action; consequences could have been more significant. The take-home message: All written work should be original and referenced appropriately (Das & Panjabi, 2011).

Professional Writing

Professional writing for a scientific journal represents an implicit contract between the reader of the work and its author. It is expected that the author of the published paper is the sole writer responsible for the material; if additional information is included, the work must be referenced (Roig, 2011). It is accepted that authors writing a professional scientific paper will reference sentinel work or key papers as part of the foundation for an evidence-based paper on a given subject (Roig, 2011).

Consequences of Plagiarism

Once discovered, plagiarism can have serious consequences. A journal can require its authors to notify his or her home institution of a plagiarism

charge or publication infraction (Benos et al., 2005). If federal funding was a part of the publication, an inquiry is required by statute; clinical trials could be held until the outcome is determined (Benos et al., 2005). The ORI’s webpage (ori.hhs.gov) lists updates on new misconduct findings by name of perpetrator, with a description of the misconduct. The list includes research misconduct as well as published papers and abstracts containing significant amounts of plagiarized text (ORI, 2012).

Plagiarism Checkers

Although not a foolproof solution to the problem, a plagiarism checker can be a valuable tool for authors and editors alike. There are a number of these tools available online: some require a fee, whereas others are free for public use. Visit the *JADPRO* website at advancedpractitioner.com for a partial list of plagiarism checkers.

In Closing

Authors must ensure that published work is original and referenced appropriately; sentences can be suspect if too close to the original material (Merriman, 2010). The Internet has made it all too easy to “cut and paste” another’s published work into your own. Your new material should be rephrased and formatted to reflect your meaning while still referencing your support documents. If reproduction of information is needed in your manuscript, then permission must be sought from the publisher.

At *JADPRO*, we want to hear from you, and we look forward to publishing original papers from advanced practice authors.

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Use your smartphone to access a partial list of plagiarism checkers available online.

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Peer Review: Publication's Gold Standard

KELLEY D. MAYDEN, MSN, FNP, AOCNP®

The dissemination of valuable and novel scientific information provides the pulse for biomedical publishing. Scientific journals catalog the contributions, thoughts, and opinions of researchers, investigators, and experts in the field. Authors consider the reputation and quality of a journal prior to submitting a manuscript for consideration. It is reasonable to think that readers also consider journal prestige as a factor in journal selection. The prestige of a journal depends on the validity, usefulness, and quality of the articles published. This article will define and examine the peer-review process as well as explore the roles and responsibilities of the peer reviewer.

The Peer-Review Process

Aside from its use in scientific journals, peer review is the process by which grants are allocated, academics are promoted, textbooks are written, and Nobel prizes are won (Smith, 2006). A publication that has been peer reviewed gains respectability and acceptance and is considered a relevant contribution to the field. Publication in a peer-reviewed journal is an important crite-

riterion for admissibility of scientific evidence in courts of law (Kumar, 2009). The basis of the peer-review process is the acceptance of written investigational findings from an author or group of authors that are then forwarded to a group of experts (referees) in the field for assessment of their quality, accuracy, relevance, and novelty (Shuttleworth, 2009). Traditionally, these experts are not paid for their opinions and are not part of an editorial staff.

The goal of peer review is to determine if an article should or should not be published and to improve the article before publication (Neale & Bowman, 2006). It is a process that entails filtering out manuscripts that are misleading, irrelevant, inaccurate, or that contain potentially harmful content (Kumar, 2009). Once the peer-review process is complete (see Figure 1), the editor of a journal bears responsibility for its content and may choose to agree or disagree with the opinions of the reviewers (Garmel, 2010).

Limitations

Despite its acceptance as a critical part of quality control, peer review is not a perfect process. In 2003, *The Cochrane Collaboration* published a review

concluding that there is little evidence to support the use of editorial peer review as a mechanism to ensure quality of biomedical research, despite its widespread use and costs (Jefferson, Rudin, Brodney Folse, & Davidoff, 2007). There are few published, randomized controlled studies relating to peer review; therefore it remains ill-defined.

The peer-review process can be time consuming, costly, subject to reviewer bias, and inept at identifying fraudulent manuscripts. A well-known example of the failure of peer review is the publication of two fraudulent papers by Hwang Woo-Suk concerning stem cell research in the journal *Science* (Kumar, 2009).

In addition, there are no agreed-upon evidence-based guidelines as to what constitutes a qualified reviewer. A study examining the relationship of previous training and experience of journal peer reviewers to subsequent review quality determined that no identifiable types of formal training or experience predicted reviewer performance. The authors suggest that journals implement routine review rating systems to periodically monitor the quality of their reviews (Callaham & Tercier, 2007).

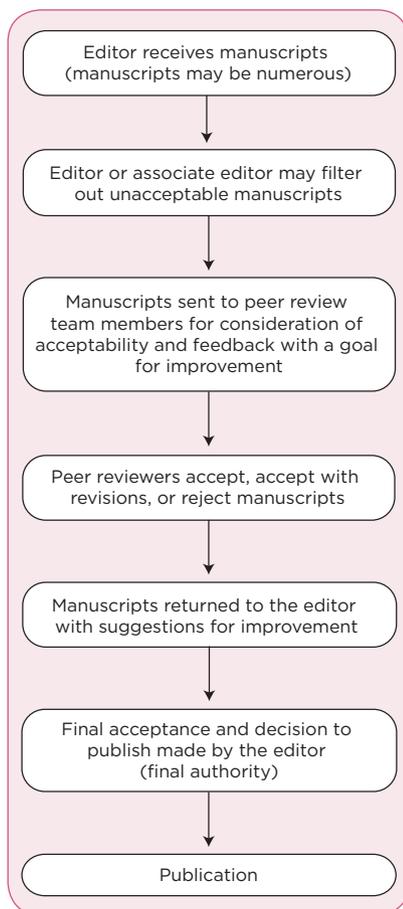


Figure 1. Key steps in the peer-review process.

Traditionally, the peer-review process has been conducted anonymously, with author and reviewer identities masked during the review process. Although this may protect reviewers from author demands and retaliation, reviewer anonymity is being debated and is under increasing scrutiny (Garmel, 2010; Leek, Taub, & Pineda, 2011). Early evidence

supporting blind peer review (McNutt, Evans, Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1990) was later challenged by studies suggesting that such a practice made no editorially significant difference to review quality, publication recommendation, or time taken to review, but did increase the probability of reviewers declining to review (van Rooyen, Godlee, Evans, Smith, & Black, 1998; Justice, Cho, Winker, Berlin, & Rennie, 1998; van Rooyen, Godlee, Evans, Black & Smith, 1999). It is possible that an open process may increase cooperation between reviewers and authors and lead to a decreased risk of reviewing errors (Leek, Taub, & Pineda, 2011).

Some journals have already considered transition to open peer review. In 1999, the *British Medical Journal* adopted an open (signed) review system that remains in place today. Most recently, the journal has examined the effect of notifying reviewers that their signed reviews might be posted on the web. Their conclusion was that alerting peer reviewers that their signed reviews might be available in the public domain on the journal's website had no important effect on review quality but was associated with a high refusal rate (van Rooyen, Delamothe, & Evans, 2010). Other journals such as *Nature* and *The Public Library of Science* are revising old review criteria, creating open access, and examining public review (Editors of *The New Atlantis*, 2011).

One study examined the effects of adding a statistical peer reviewer

and using a checklist of manuscript quality. The study showed a positive effect when a statistical reviewer was added to the field-expert peers, but no statistically significant positive effect was suggested by the use of reporting guidelines (Cobo et al., 2007). Additional alternative methods of peer review such as open peer review without suppression of publication, postpublication review, a hybrid system (traditional with postpublication review), author-suggested peer review, author model of peer review, and peer review consortia have been discussed and explored in the literature (Kumar, 2009).

Reviewer Responsibilities

However ill-defined it may be, the peer-review process is still the gold standard that will continue to drive scholarly publication. Understandably, a large part of the responsibility for the success or failure of the peer-review process depends upon peer reviewers. A peer reviewer should be both a scholar and a scientist with complex analytical skills, which allows for the critical analysis of data in the interest of improved outcomes (Bearinger, 2006).

Peer review can be time consuming and laborious; therefore, accepting the responsibility of peer review requires commitment on the part of the reviewer. It should be viewed as a professional responsibility, not to be taken lightly, given that the end result determines what is relevant, in print, to a specific body of knowledge. Just as editors and journals respect their reviewers, often acknowledging their contributions publicly, reviewers should respect



Use your smartphone to access the CONSORT Statement and the EQUATOR Network's resources for editors and peer reviewers.

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the editor and the journal by producing a quality of work that is consistent with the journal's reputation and integrity.

Just as a surgeon would prepare for surgery, a reviewer must prepare for a review. First, it is important to understand a selected journal's mission and review criteria as they will be incorporated into manuscript review. Once an invitation to review is accepted, reviewers normally agree to complete the assigned manuscript review within a specified time frame. This is not only important to journals and editors who have publication deadlines, but to authors who eagerly await news of acceptance or rejection. Time is especially important in cases where the author is asked to consider recommended revisions prior to a final decision of acceptance or rejection. Second, reviewers must maintain confidentiality; using any information gained for self-interest or extracurricular professional discussion is unethical.

Given that a reviewer's authority to recommend a manuscript's acceptance or rejection carries weight with an editor's final publication decision, careful consideration of the manuscript and each individual section is required prior to any such recommendation. A fair analysis requires a reviewer to have undisturbed focus, a discerning eye for detail, and knowledge of appropriate sectional content (see Table 1). It is important to consider if the information is accurate, understandable, valid, useful, and transparent. Grammar is important, and errors can be pointed out; however, the main

Table 1. Sectional Content for Manuscript Review

Abstract

- Brief, comprehensive summary of article contents
- Written in clear, concise language
- Includes the most important concepts, findings, implications
- Usually the first article contact for readers

Introduction

- Presents problem or concept under study
- Describes research strategy (not design)
- States hypotheses

Method

- Meticulous description of how the study was conducted
- Includes study criteria, variables, operational definitions
- Detailed enough to provide for study replication

Results

- Summarizes data and data analysis
- Includes results that are counter to positive study
- Good place for tables, graphs, charts for clarity

Discussion

- Opens with statement of support or nonsupport for hypothesis
- Explains and qualifies results
- Allows for inferences and conclusions
- States theoretical or practical consequences of results

Conclusion

- Summary of the problem, findings, implications
- Brief, concise, direct
- Conclusion supported by article data

References

- Conform to journal expectations/format
- Acknowledges previous scholarly work
- Information provides easy location of sourced material

Appendices

- Appropriate for brief material easily presented in print format
- May include headings or subheadings

Tables and figures

- Supplement not duplicate text
- Not appropriate for small amounts of data
- Class of information should be mentioned in the text

Note. Adapted from American Psychological Association (2010).

concern for the reviewer is relevancy of manuscript content.

Table 2 provides a list of important questions to consider when reviewing a manuscript. A helpful resource to guide review is the CONSORT Statement. Updated in 2010, it provides guidance for reporting all randomized controlled trials (CONSORT, 2010). An additional resource is the EQUATOR Network (2012),

an international initiative that seeks to improve the reliability and value of medical research literature by promoting transparent and accurate reporting of research studies.

All reviewers are subject to bias. Gender, patriotism, and linguistic preference have been shown to affect peer review (Kumar, 2009). Reviewers are more likely to favor manuscripts that are clearly written, are cre-

Table 2. Important Questions to Consider When Reviewing a Manuscript

Does the manuscript present novel or important information?
Is the information relevant to the body of knowledge?
Is the information presented accurate and evidence-based?
Are references provided and what is the quality of the references?
Is the writing clear, concise, and logical?
Are manuscript structure and content formatted properly, including tables/figures?
Is the abstract descriptive of the message in the paper?
Are any bias or ethical concerns identified?
Are there any areas that could benefit from further explanation?
Are there any areas that could be deleted?
If research based, does the information presented allow for experiment duplication?

Table 3. Reviewers' Responsibilities to Authors

Provide written, honest, and unbiased feedback in a timely manner
Express a critical opinion about the manuscript, as experts in the field, in a collegial and constructive manner
Comment on the style of writing, especially its clarity
Rate the work's detail, methodology, relevance, accuracy, and originality
Avoid comments or criticisms of a personal nature
Maintain professionalism and confidentiality, especially given the competitive nature of research, funding availability, and publication
Refrain from directly contacting authors without permission from the editor, unless the journal stipulates otherwise

Note. Repinted, with permission, from Garmel (2010).

ative, demonstrate positive results, and have interesting titles, meanwhile rejecting manuscripts with negative results, multiple errors, and seasoned information (Garmel, 2010). It is possible that senior reviewers may reject their juniors; manuscripts from more prestigious institutions may be more readily accepted than those from lesser-known institutions (Kumar, 2009). Reviewers are responsible for disclosing biases that may hinder an impartial and balanced review. Lack of expertise in an area may not hinder

review as useful comments may still be collected, but in this circumstance, the editor should be informed that a lack of expertise exists (Garmel, 2010).

Once the review is complete, reviewers offer scholarly input with the intent to improve the manuscript. Feedback should be constructive and the critique professional and positive. When a reviewer provides feedback that enables authors to revise and resubmit a publishable paper, the peer-review process is working as intended (Bearinger, 2006). Length of the review

is not as important as detailed suggestions for improvement. The review should begin with a recommendation for rejection, acceptance with minor revisions, or acceptance with major revisions. The reviewer should comment on the manuscript as a whole, then provide input on each individual section. Suggestions should be clear and provide direction. Comments should be detailed enough to assist authors with revisions but not so detailed that the manuscript is rewritten (Garmel, 2010). Reviewers should remember to comment

on the appropriateness of the abstract and be certain it mirrors the content of the manuscript.

Reviewing provides an opportunity for learning and gaining exposure to cutting-edge research (Bearinger, 2006). Reviewing is a skill that requires critical thinking; it will improve with time, practice, personal research, and writing. A good reviewer is competent, knowledgeable, unbiased, objective, punctual, consistent, ethically sound, constructive, and maintains confidentiality (Garmel, 2010; Kumar, 2009).

Feedback

Reviewers, like authors, can benefit from feedback; they should welcome input from editors and experienced colleagues. Feedback is important for both new and seasoned reviewers. Editors at a specialty journal in the top 11% of the Institute of Scientific Information's bibliographic database (ranked by number of citations) performed a 14-year longitudinal study designed to evaluate change in the review quality of individual peer reviewers. The study found that over time most journal peer reviewers received lower quality scores for article assessment. Proposed reasons were cognitive changes, competing priorities, or escalating expectations (Callaham & McCulloch, 2011). Although it is not common practice, results such as these suggest that ongoing self-evaluation by the reviewer and validated reviewer evaluation on the part of the editor are important factors for ensuring quality peer review.

Reviewing is a professional privilege, and reviewers are

Table 4. Reviewers' Responsibilities to Editors

Respond to the editors promptly if unable or unavailable to review a manuscript
Recommend names of other experts as potential reviewers if unavailable
Determine the scientific merit of the submission, with recommendations for acceptance or rejection
Identify opportunities to improve the manuscript
Point out potential ethical concerns about research methodologies or similarities with other papers or ongoing research
Acknowledge personal or author conflicts of interest and inform the editor of these

Note. Adapted, with permission, from Garmel (2010).

Table 5. Reviewers' Responsibilities to Readers

Ensure that published articles adhere to journal standards, as well as to standards of scientific practice
Protect readers from incorrect or flawed research
Identify missed references or erroneous citations (including misquoting or misinterpreting an author's findings)

Note. Adapted, with permission, from Garmel (2010).

advised to remember they are representing a journal and have responsibilities to authors (see Table 3), editors (see Table 4), and readers (see Table 5). Perhaps most importantly, reviewers are accountable to the medical community and the scientific body of knowledge impacted by their reviews.

Conclusion

While it is not a perfect process, traditional peer review remains the gold standard for evaluating and selecting quality scientific publications. Additional research and the development of evidenced-based guidelines are needed to govern this process, which is expected to evolve in the future. Peer review is both an art and a science largely dependent on

the quality of its review body. Competent peer reviewers are experts in their field accountable to authors, editors, readers, and the medical community. Peer reviewers act as advocates, or referees, for authors and enable editors to make quality publication decisions. Peer review is a professional privilege and responsibility that directly impacts what is accepted as important to a body of knowledge. Although the peer-review process can be time consuming and underappreciated, rewards such as mentorship, learning, exposure to cutting-edge research, and personal development make it a worthwhile investment.

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Writing Articles for Peer-Review Publications: A Quick Reference Guide

An abundance of resources and guidelines exist for researchers writing for peer-reviewed journals. This quick reference provides: a broad overview of the writing process; guidelines for determining the type of article to write; considerations for choosing a journal and submitting the article; and links to several comprehensive resources for journal authors. Whether you have published many articles during your career or have never submitted a manuscript for peer-review publication, we hope that this reference will provide you with some useful tips and resources.

Overview of the Writing Process



General Resources

- [Understanding the Publishing Process](#) ¹
- [How to Get Your Journal Article Published](#) ²
- How to Get Published: [Video](#) and [PDF](#) ³

Narrowing Down a Topic

The first step in writing an article for peer-review publication is to narrow down and frame or “scope out” your topic.

Ask yourself:

- Which interventions or programs are being implemented?
- What populations are targeted?
- What policies are involved?
- What is the health care context?
- What gaps in the current literature will your article fill?
- Who are the audiences that will be interested in your findings?

Simply put, what story are you trying to tell, and to whom?

Selecting the Type of Article to Write

Next, consider what type of article will allow you to convey your message most effectively. Points to consider:

- Are you presenting a study on the impact of a new clinical or public health intervention or an analysis of an existing approach? What data do you have? If your data and methods are original, robust, and compelling, consider writing a research report.
- Are you presenting an innovation, policy development, opinion, or idea? Is your topic of broad concern to your intended audience? If your argument is grounded in the scholarly literature, consider writing a descriptive article. If your topic is based in personal opinion or experience, consider a perspective piece or case study.

Keep these questions in mind as you select the type of article to write. The majority of articles in peer-review scientific and medical journals are empirical research reports;⁵ while journals publish other types of articles as well, research reports will be the easiest to publish, especially for new authors. The chart below describes several general categories of articles that may be relevant to the Beacon Communities, including research reports, descriptive articles, perspectives, and case studies.

Table 1. Article types and descriptions

Type of Article	Description
Research Report	Original quantitative (e.g. reports of randomized controlled trials, observational studies, or other clinical and public health investigations) or qualitative (e.g. interviews, focus groups) research. Research reports may be long or short, and must follow a specified structure (introduction/hypothesis, methods, results, discussion) and contain compelling data to support conclusion(s). These make up the majority of journal articles.
Descriptive Article	Focus on timely or controversial issues and are grounded in the relevant scholarly literature. They should be broadly informative, offering new insight and prompting new thinking. Some examples include policy papers; conceptual papers analyzing existing literature; descriptions of programs, interventions, or innovative practices; focused approaches to solve a particular problem; and efforts to translate research into policy and/or practice. ⁶ If the descriptions of programs involve interviewing administrators or participants, then rigorous qualitative methods need to be used for the article to be publishable (see above).
Perspective	Perspectives describe a considered view about one or more issues, propose and support a new hypothesis, or theorize the implications of newly implemented programs or innovations; they are generally based on opinion and/or personal insight (see specific journal guidelines). ⁷
Case Study	Stories about experiences of patients with the health care system; experiences of providers treating a single patient with a specific disease or condition; or experiences of institutions with implementing a new system or method.

See Appendix A for a table showing which journals publish each type of article listed above.

Selecting a Journal

Once you decide on the type of article to write, the next step is to identify one or more appropriate journals. Though protocol prohibits the simultaneous submission of articles to more than one journal, it is wise to identify two-three potential publishers of your work in case the first attempt with the priority journal is not successful.

You may search for journals in online databases (see chart below) or in the periodicals sections of the library. To maximize your chances of being published, an excellent rule of thumb is to look at the most relevant articles in your citation list—as well as those articles' citations—to see where they were published. If you are citing a journal's articles, this indicates the journal's areas of focus and signals a good fit for your article.

Unless you have a specific reason otherwise, a general guideline is to focus on peer-reviewed, U.S.-published journals. If you are not sure whether your article is a good fit, contact the editors to gauge their interest in the topic. Editors appreciate inquiries, and even if they say they are not interested, they may provide helpful feedback explaining their response.

Some questions to consider as you select a journal:

- Does your topic fit the journal's aims and scope? Have they recently published articles related to your topic? Do they publish the type of article you would like to write?
- Who is the journal's audience (e.g. policymakers, practitioners, researchers)? Does it align with your intended audience?
- Does the journal have an upcoming theme or special issue on your topic?
- How often is the journal published? How many articles does it publish each year? What is the journal's acceptance/rejection rate?
- What is the response time (i.e., once you submit, how quickly are they able to review and respond?) Is there a publishing backlog (i.e. once accepted, how long until your article is published?)
- What is the journal's rank and impact factor (average number of citations received per paper published in the journal during the two preceding years)? Find impact factor [here](#).

Table 2. Databases to search for journals

Free Databases	Publisher Databases (free access)	Access through Library or Institution	Subscription Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PubMed/MedLine • Genamics JournalSeek • Google Scholar • Directory of Open Access Journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elsevier • Sage • Springer • Taylor & Francis • Wiley-Blackwell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingenta • JSTOR • Project Muse • Thomson Reuters' Web of Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane Database • EMBASE • Science Direct • Ulrich's Directory

Resources to help you select a journal:

- **Springer Journal Selector:** matches keywords or text (such as a draft abstract) to relevant Springer journals (2,000+ total)
- **Checklist** to help decide to which journal you will submit⁸
 - Square checkboxes = advantageous or neutral characteristics
 - Circular checkboxes = negative characteristics, Avoid these!

New Publication Opportunity: e-GEMs (E)lectronic publications (G)enerating (E)vidence and (M)ethods)

- e-GEMs is the new open-access electronic publication of AcademyHealth's Electronic Data Methods (EDM) Forum. e-GEMs is now accepting submissions related to innovative uses of electronic clinical data for quality improvement (QI), comparative effectiveness research (CER), and patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR). Click [here](#) for more information.

Once you have selected a journal:

- Read its aims, scope and instructions for authors
- Read recent issues to familiarize yourself with the types of articles they typically publish

Writing The Article

As you write your article, be sure to adhere to the selected journal's instructions for authors regarding:

- Authorship
 - This can be a point of contention when writing in groups, so establish expectations for roles and responsibilities early in the writing process. See the ICMJE guidelines for authorship [here](#).
- Page and/or Word Limits
- Article Components
 - e.g. Title, **keywords**, abstract, introduction, body, discussion/conclusion, references
- Formatting
 - e.g. Double/single spaced, margins, section headings
- Citation Style
 - e.g. **APA, Vancouver**
- Permissions and Approvals
 - e.g. IRB approval, registration of clinical trials, permissions for reprinting copyrighted material
- Ethical Considerations
 - e.g. Author approval for submission, disclosures of conflict of interest, attestation that paper has not been submitted or published elsewhere
- Submission Process
 - e.g. Cover letter, electronic/paper submission, supplementary materials

Writing Resources:

- **ICMJE:** Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals
- **EQUATOR Network** (Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency Of health Research): this website has a resource center with information for authors, as well as a library of resources and reporting guidelines for writing different types of articles.
- **SQUIRE** (Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence): guidelines for writing about quality improvement with accompanying **checklist**.
- **STARE-HI** (Statement on Reporting of Evaluation studies in Health Informatics)
- **Writing about Innovations:** editorial with guidelines for writing descriptive articles about health care innovations.
- **Preparing an Article for Academic Medicine:** PowerPoint with useful tips for writing descriptive articles in general as well as for this specific journal.
- **How to Write and Publish an Academic Research Paper:** 101 Tips from JournalPrep.com
- **IHI Webinar:** "Preparing Your Improvement Work for Publication"
- **IHI/Hastings Center Report:** The Ethics of Using QI Methods to Improve Health Care Quality and Safety

Submitting the Article

Before submitting the article, proofread carefully and ask a colleague or "fresh pair of eyes" to read your manuscript and provide comments.

Academic writing and publishing is a difficult process, and realistically your article may not be accepted on the first try. Whether the journal rejects or accepts your article, keep in mind the following:

It is your job to defend your effort and communicate the importance of your topic to the reviewers.

Reviewer comments reflect their perspective on a particular piece of work, not on you. Do not be offended or overly discouraged by them; use the opportunity to improve your publication.

If asked to revise and resubmit the article, be sure to address *all* comments and provide some rationale if you deviate from what was suggested.

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Appendix A. Article Types and Corresponding Categories in Major Journals

Click the journal name to view the journal's instructions for authors and detailed descriptions of each type of article.

Journal Title (link to author instructions)	Article Category			
	Research Report	Descriptive Article	Perspective	Case Study
Academic Medicine*	Research Reports	Articles	Perspectives	
AJPM: American Journal of Preventive Medicine*	Research Articles Brief Reports Research Letters	Current Issues		
Diabetes Spectrum*	Research Articles Features	Features Departments	Guest Editorials	
Health Affairs		Theme Articles	Narrative Matters	Narrative Matters
Health Services Research	Research Articles	Policy Impact Articles Research Briefs Methods Articles	Debates/Commentaries	
JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*	Original Contributions Clinical Trials Caring for the Critically Ill Patient Brief Reports Research Letters	Viewpoint	A Piece of My Mind	JAMA Clinical Challenge
JAMIA: Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*	Research Applications	Research Applications Brief Communications Case Reports	Editorials	Case Reports
Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved*	Original Papers Brief Communications	Original Papers Brief Communications Reports from the Field		Heroes & Great Ideas
Journal of Public Health Management & Practice*	Research Brief Reports Research Articles	Practice Brief Reports		Case Studies
The Milbank Quarterly*	Articles	Articles	Articles	
Medical Care Research & Review *	Empirical Research	Review Articles		
New England Journal of Medicine	Original Research Special Articles	Clinical Practice Clinical Therapeutics Current Concepts Perspectives Health Policy Reports	Editorials Sounding Board	Brief Reports Clinical Problem-Solving

*Participated in February dissemination workshop. Additional journals listed in Appendix C.

Appendix B. Author Resources from Publishers

- *Elsevier*: Journal Authors' Home
- *Sage*: Journal Author Gateway
- *Springer*: Journal Author Home
- *Taylor & Francis Group*: Author Services Website
- *Wiley-Blackwell*: Author Services

Appendix C. Instructions for Authors for Specific Journals

- *Academic Medicine**
- *American Journal of Medical Quality*
- *American Journal of Preventive Medicine**
- *Diabetes Spectrum**
- *e-GEMs (new publication opportunity!)*
- *Health Affairs*
- *Health Promotion Practice*
- *Health Services Research*
- *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*
- *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association**
- *JAMIA: Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association**
- *Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved**
- *Journal of Public Health Management & Practice**
- *Medical Care Research & Review**
- *The Milbank Quarterly**
- *New England Journal of Medicine*
- *Population Health Management*
- *Telemedicine and E-Health*

*Participated in February dissemination workshop

Appendix D. Books Available for Purchase

- Belcher WL. *Writing your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications; 2009.
- Benson PJ, Silver SC. *What Editors Want: An Author's Guide to Scientific Journal Publishing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 2012.
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Endnotes

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