First Cut: A Journal Manager’s Perception of Quality Research

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Part 1: Submitting A Manuscript for Publication
Role of the Journal Manager

- Read each newly submitted manuscript
- Decide if it has the potential to be published
- Consult with Editor in Chief (Dr. Spero M. Manson) to choose 2-3 peer reviewers
- Send to peer reviewers to check rigor/scientific quality
- Edit grammar, flow, formatting
Role of the Journal Manager, continued

- Read peer reviewers’ comments
- Decide if manuscript can continue in the publication process
- Return manuscript to authors for revision
- Once revised, check to ensure all comments are addressed
- Edit again until it is ready for publication
- Format and upload new issue (3-5 articles)
Choosing a Journal

- Appropriate topic
- Time spent submitting to a journal that is not a good fit is valuable time that the manuscript is not being considered by a more appropriate journal!
- Communication: If you’re not sure, please ask!
Choosing a Journal, continued

- Regarding topic, our journal doesn’t have a lot of restrictions besides mental health and population.
- Other journals publish many different article types.
- There may be different requirements for different types of articles.
- Check the guidelines to see where the manuscript will fit best.
Following Guidelines

- Every journal has guidelines for authors.
- Following the guidelines can make a manuscript stand out in a positive way!
- I will ask authors to fix anything that is not formatted according to guidelines.
Following Guidelines, continued

- Some guidelines help me read the manuscript and send it to reviewers.
- If these are not followed, I will return the manuscript before reading it.
- Communication: If you’re not sure, please ask!
Parts of the Manuscript

Most research articles (what we usually publish) include:

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Method
- Results
- Discussion
- Limitations
- References

I’ll discuss the boldface ones in more detail
Parts of the Manuscript: Introduction

- Clearly introduce the subject
  - History
  - Importance
- What work has already been done in this area (summary or literature review)
- What is still lacking – Why is this new work needed?
- Hypotheses
- Briefly define terms/concepts that readers will need
- Define abbreviations/acronyms, then just use the abbreviation.
- Be succinct! Too much information will lose readers’ attention.
Parts of the Manuscript: Method

- Who initiated the work
- Who was on the research team and what they did
- Scales or measures and their reliability and validity
- Participant selection (or articles for a lit review)
- Consent process; participant compensation
- Tribal, community, review board approval
- What analyses were used and why (vs. alternatives)
- Be clear about process and time periods
Parts of the Manuscript: Results

- Keep items in the same order
- Present only the relevant results
- Tables versus text – many results can be presented clearly in tables
- Results only – avoid the temptation to start interpreting them here
Parts of the Manuscript: Discussion

- Continue to keep items in the same order
- Explain how this work adds to previous research
  - Refer to the summary or literature review from the Introduction
  - Does this work support previous findings? Or were the results different?
- Emphasize connections
  - Implications and next steps will be clear to the researchers, but not to readers
Parts of the Manuscript: Limitations

- Every study has limitations
- It’s impossible to account for all factors outside of a real-world environment
- Note any limitations at the end of the Discussion
  - How authors worked around the things they were not able to control
  - Why the study is still useful
  - How future research can address issues
Parts of the Manuscript: References

- Check journal guidelines for requirements
- Become familiar with frequently used styles
- Use reference management software
- It is worth the effort to format references correctly
Quality of Writing

- Everything needs editing! Don’t get discouraged.
- If a manuscript needs too much editing, I will send it back before peer review.

Resources

- Writing Center, English Department, colleagues who have been published
- Grammarly [www.grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com), apps, Chrome add-in, Facebook tips
- See handout
Quality of Writing, continued

- Write simply
- Avoid jargon, technical terms, passive voice
  - “We conducted the study in two communities,” not “The study was conducted in two communities…”
- Paragraphs of passive voice are hard to read
- Provide enough detail for readers, but not too much
  - Ask a colleague if the description of the research makes sense
- Word count
  - Many journals have strict word limits
  - Often a manuscript can be shortened without affecting the content
Revision Process

- We give most authors an opportunity to revise and resubmit.
- We only reject a manuscript at this stage if it has scientific flaws that cannot be fixed.
- We ask authors to draft a letter that explains where and how each reviewer comment is addressed in the revision.
Revision Process, continued

- When submitting a revision:
  - Address all comments
  - OK to disagree, but explain why – don’t ignore the comment
  - Add explanations to the manuscript, not just the letter
Revision Process, continued

- We usually only do one round of peer reviews
- But the editing process can take several rounds
  - Edit new information or extensive rewrites
  - Make sure concepts are introduced at the correct time, terms are defined when they are first used
- Don’t get discouraged!
Summary: Part 1

- Choose an appropriate journal
- Follow guidelines
- Write clearly
  - Balance – clarity but not too much detail
- Be patient with the revision process
  - The goal is to publish articles that are as clear and informative as possible
- Communication is key!
  - If you’re not sure, please ask!
Part 2: Recent Trends in Publication
Recent Trends Related to Academic Journals

- Online publication
  - Articles available sooner
  - Public access
- PMCID Numbers
  - For NIH-funded work
- Digital Object Identifiers
  - Online stability
- Interactivity
- Impact Factor
Online publication

- American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research is published online only.
- It is free and open access.
  - No subscription needed.
  - Everyone has access to each issue as soon as it is published.
- This is rare.
Online publication, continued

- Most journals are published online/print
- Subscription still needed
- Some journals now make older articles available online for free
- Many journals publish a few articles online before the next scheduled issue
- Content is final, formatting may not be
  - “epub ahead of print”
- New information is available sooner
PMCID Numbers

- If the work is funded by the National Institutes of Health, the publication needs a PMCID number.
- PMC = PubMed Central
  - Online repository of articles written from NIH-funded research
  - Free to the public one year after they are published in a journal
  - Increases online public access
  - NIH is taxpayer funded
PMCID Numbers, continued

- Author’s responsibility, not the journal’s
- Submit article soon after publication
  - My NCBI (National Center for Biotechnology Information) – Register for an account
  - Features include My Bibliography:
    - Import PubMed search results
    - Link NIH-funded publications – to grants
    - Automatically generate publication lists (progress reports)
    - Submit articles for PMCIDs
- Noncompliance will delay funding!
Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)

- Provide a permanent, stable online link to an article
  - URLs often change and stop working
- Assigned by the journal
  - A few organizations administer all DOIs
  - Example: CrossRef – I assign DOIs, CrossRef ensures they work
- Example: [http://dx.doi.org/10.5820/aian.2302.1](http://dx.doi.org/10.5820/aian.2302.1)
  - http prefix is always the same
  - Number preassigned by CrossRef, always starts with 10
  - aian = American Indian and Alaska Native
  - 23 = volume, 02 = issue, 1 = starting page number
Digital Object Identifiers, continued

- APA style requires DOIs in the reference list for journals, whenever available.
- If you have a working bibliography, it’s worthwhile to add DOIs now – you will need them.
Interactivity

- A great benefit of online publication!
- Audio, video, and other elements besides text can now be included in an article
- Especially helpful for medical journals
  - *New England Journal of Medicine* – EKG/test results
- Worth pursuing if your work lends itself to multimedia
Impact Factor

- Average number of times that articles have been cited recently
- Calculated with 2 years of data
  - The 2015 impact factor looks at 2013 and 2014
  - How many times in 2015 did other authors cite works that the journal published in 2013 and 2014? - divided by -
  - How many total articles from that journal could be cited?
- Higher is better
- Controversy
  - Does it really reflect journal quality?
  - Is it appropriate for all journals?
Thank You!

- If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me
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