

Editorial

Getting published!

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Why to publish, where to publish and how to publish are questions faced by all budding researchers. Lack of time, unfamiliarity with the process and unpleasant past experiences like rejection and criticism are lame excuses not to publish. The more you delve deeper into the process, the more you experience, the more you learn! Through this editorial, I share some important steps in this journey of publication which I hope shall prove useful to all aspiring authors.

CHOOSING THE JOURNAL

There are questions you need to ask yourself to help you decide your target journal that would suit your work:

- Is the journal genuine and authentic? (*Beware of lurking predators!*^[1])
- Is the journal peer-reviewed? (*Avoid non peer reviewed journals*)
- What are the journal characteristics? – aim, scope, audience, distribution, types of articles accepted, editorial board, publishing regularity, publishing time taken, acceptance and rejection rate and links to any societies or associations. All these details would be easily available on the journal's website, for example, <https://gjcsro.com>
- What is the journal's Impact Factor?
- What is the journal's indexing status? (*All journals are non-indexed to begin with!*)
- Are the journal and article appropriate for each other?

You may also want to decide whether your work suits a general medical, general ophthalmology or a specialist journal. This decision will help you write your manuscript befitting the readers.

Finally, submit to one journal only. It is against publication ethics to submit to multiple journals simultaneously.

WRITING THE PAPER

Deciding the journal first will help you write your manuscript according to its format. Always follow the journal's instructions to authors. If not done, you are mostly likely to face a 'desk reject' or an early return for technical revision. It also creates a negative impression on the editor that you have not bothered to either check or follow the journal's instructions which are always easily available on the journal's website. Reviewing some of the articles of the target journal will also help in understanding the journal's format for different articles.

SUBMITTING A PAPER

Most large scale journals have links for online submission on their website, for example, <https://editorialassist.com/gjcsro>. Some may, however, require the manuscript files to be directly mailed to the editor of the journal. Do also check about the other documents that need to be submitted along with the main manuscript, such as the title page, cover page, contributor details, copyright form, ethical approval letter, declaration for conflicts of interest and checklist (In the Global Journal of Cataract Surgery and Research in Ophthalmology [GJCSRO], most of these submissions are online and automated). Ethical concerns form a major roadblock in the publication process, so before submitting, confirm the authorship order and check your manuscript for significant plagiarism. The acceptable similarity limit varies among journals and publishers.

RECEIVING THE RESPONSE

Give enough time to the editorial team to scrutinise your submission adequately. Do keep in mind that the entire review process is a non-remunerated job for the editors and reviewers and their involvement is due to their interest in science, research and writing. Nevertheless, if an unexpected

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prolonged delay is there, you may drop in a friendly courteous mail inquiring with the editor.

Acceptance of manuscript without change is rare and it is a sign of your immense hard work for research as well as manuscript writing. Outright rejection is usually due to a poorly written manuscript, lack of scientific rigor, article not fulfilling the journal requirements, or it being beyond the scope of the journal. A request for revision is usually (though not necessarily) good news and it brings you a little closer to your destination. It would be helpful to remember that the peer review process is a masked one, and hence, the reviewers are almost never aware about the identity of the authors. Their comments and criticism are only to help strengthen your manuscript and not out of any bias or prejudice. When revising, address all comments, always change technical errors, errors in references and parts which have been mentioned by multiple reviewers.

THE VERDICT

Once all the revisions and re-reviews have been done, the decision on your article would be made by the editor. It is not uncommon for papers to be rejected even after multiple revisions.^[2] In that case, you may consider submitting to another journal. Before re-submitting elsewhere, remember to fix all the flaws and incorporate all the referee suggestions. If your article is accepted, it will be returned for proof

reading to check for printing, writing, or formatting errors or other items that need rectification or clarifications. You will be required to do this at the earliest.^[3]

REACHING THE DESTINATION

Once the final proof is accepted, you may see different stages of your published article – on the journal website as 'ahead of print', then an online version and finally the print version if the journal has a paper format also for circulation.

Writing a paper is a skill that, like any other skill, just requires practice. The more you write and publish, the easier it is; of course the science behind the writing should always be sound. I hope that these small tips will help you overcome your barriers and give you the courage to enter the world of scientific writing.

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