

PERSONAL VIEW ARTICLE / ЛИЧНИ СТАВ

How to publish your scientific work

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In order for your scientific endeavors to impact patients outside your home institution it is valuable for your results to be published in a peer reviewed journal. Peer reviewed journals generally have a broader distribution than non-peer reviewed journals and they are more highly regarded in the medical and scientific fields. Therefore, publication of scientific results in a peer reviewed journal has a greater potential to broadly impact patient care and lower morbidity. To assess the influence of a peer reviewed journal, consider the Impact Factor[®] of the journal, which is a quantitative measure of how frequently published articles from that journal are cited in the scientific literature. A higher Impact Factor[®] suggests the influence of that journal is greater.

There are two important criteria for manuscript acceptance. The information must have clinical relevance and it should be novel. To demonstrate clinical relevance, the results of your study should directly influence an improved diagnostic method, procedure or aspect of patient care. Novel information is new information that has not been previously published. This concept was summarized by Abraham Lincoln, an American president, in 1863: "I know of nothing so pleasant to the mind as the discovery of anything which is at once new and valuable." In order to determine if your work is novel, conduct a thorough search of the scientific literature. Center your search on journals where related studies are published. In reviewing the various journals, you are likely to identify the journal that is best suited to publish your study.

As you are preparing to write the first draft of your manuscript, keep your readers in mind. Will they find the material interesting? Will they be able to apply the information directly to clinical practice, to anatomy education or, possibly, to both?

Once you have selected the journal where you plan to submit your manuscript, find the instructions for authors, sometimes called the

"guidelines for authors." It is critical to conform to the general guidelines, paying particular attention to the format for bibliographic references. Using the proper format for references early on in the process makes manuscript preparation much easier and more efficient.

Since anatomy and imaging techniques broadly used in everyday clinical practice are visual sciences, the illustrations in your manuscript need to be of the highest possible quality. Photographs need to have optimal resolution and sufficient file size; graphics should be created by a professional medical illustrator. Most graphics are a straightforward rendering of the relevant anatomy, but occasionally the illustrator needs a deeper understanding of the topic. This is particularly important when one is trying to introduce a new anatomical concept.

Some journals allow the author to suggest reviewers. During your literature search, note who is doing research relevant to your study and well-designed studies that are similar to yours. Authors of these articles may be appropriate to review your manuscript. Some journals also allow you to specify who should *not* review your manuscript. Is there anyone in your field who would benefit from your research not being published? Do you have a scientific rival? This is not common for people early in their careers, but rather tends to come into play with some well-established scientists.

If you plan to use human specimens in your study, it is mandatory to have obtained proper permission from your Institutional Review Board (IRB) before you begin. Clearly state in your manuscript that such permission was obtained. If you used cadaveric material, it is appropriate to express gratitude to the donors who have contributed to your willed body program or body donation program.

Various responses are possible after your manuscript has been submitted and reviewed. A few manuscripts are accepted without revision, although this is unusual. More commonly,

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a manuscript is conditionally accepted pending major or minor revisions. The distinction between major and minor revisions is frequently difficult to define. Unfortunately, manuscripts are also rejected after review or rejected without review (i.e. “expedited rejection”). Expedited rejection is most likely to occur when the editor(s) believe your topic is not within the scope of that journal.

If your manuscript is accepted pending revisions, take the reviewers’ opinions seriously; one assumes that the reviewers want to improve your manuscript. This is sometimes challenging because individual reviews can be conflicting, and what may be clear to you may not be clear to the reviewers. Whenever possible, make modifications the reviewers suggest. If it is not possible to address their concerns, clearly state your reasoning for not doing so. For example, a reviewer may suggest a larger sample size for your study, but for practical reasons this simply might not be possible. Perhaps there are very limited specimens or collection of the specimens is financially prohibitive. Clearly address these issues in your response.

If your revised manuscript is rejected, you could consider submitting it to another journal. Your literature search would have involved many journals and another

one may be where you could successfully submit your revised manuscript.

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PREVIOUS PRESENTATION

This manuscript is based on an oral presentation given by Stephen Carmichael at the 19th Congress of the IFAA, London, August 9, 2019. An abstract, “How to publish your clinically related anatomical research” was submitted.

Conflict of interest: None declared.