European Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology

How to get your paper published in a scientific journal

In general, when you write a paper to submit to scientific journals there is high competition from other authors and research groups. It can be a challenge to get your work published, especially in your early career. It is important that you can create interest of your research results by capturing editors and reviewer's interest. It can be stressful getting a paper published in a scientific journal.

Here are some tips so you hopefully don't get stressed during the preparation of your manuscript, submission and reviewers' comments.

5 tips to prepare your manuscript

1. Tell it like a story
   Your research question should be short and precise, and preferable easy to answer. Your manuscript should be logically structured. Your research should be explained in an easy, logical language. Tell it so your mom understands it – not only to peers.
2. A short title
   A good title is short and attracts attention.
3. Conclusion corresponds with aim
   Conclusion is never just resume of the result section. You need to answer the aim of the paper. Furthermore, it can be interesting to write a takeaway point in the conclusion.
4. Use images
   Most humans understand difficult stuff better when they see images or drawings of the issue. Make sure to explain theory, method or diseases etc. using images.
5. Discussion
   The discussion section is the most difficult section of the paper.
   The first lines of the discussion should summarize the main results – preferable short and clear.
   In the end of the discussion section remember to include a limitation section. This will show the reader that you know your research has some limitation, and you have thought about how to limit these errors and how they have or have not affected your results.

5 tips before you submit

- Find the best journal to your paper
  Take a critical look at your results and your paper in general. Is it groundbreaking news then go for a journal with high impact, otherwise look for journals that has published topics similar to your research topic. Make a realistic list of your top 5 journals. Start with your number 1 priority, and if you receive a rejection then try to submit to the next on your list. You can also use Elsevier journal finder portal https://journalfinder.elsevier.com/, or Sage journal recommender. Make sure your paper is within the journal.
- Read and reread the submission guidelines.
  All journals have their own guidelines including headers, citation, and word limits. Make sure to follow the guideline. Some journals have a template that is required to use before submission. Some journals have a submission checklist to offer support.
- English editing
  The English language can be tricky for non-native speakers. Try to limit typo errors and spelling mistakes, paying attention to the spelling and grammer check facility in Word, which is a good start, but if possible, get your paper read by a native English speaker. This will make your paper appear professional and readable.
  Be consistent with either English or American spelling.
- Short versus long papers
  Be aware that it is more likely that short articles will be read rather than long articles.
  Don't include unnecessary text passages in your paper. Don't repeat yourself.
- Letter to the editor
  The letter to the editor is often forgotten during the process. Typically, less effort and little time is spent on this letter. This letter is very important because this is when the editor decides whether your work will be sent for review or rejected. In the letter to the editor, you need to explain why your work is important, and what it contributes within the scientific knowledge. Papers are often rejected if there is lack of clarity about why this research is important.

After submission

1. Revise, resubmit or reject
   Stay strong. The majority of all articles in all journals receive an either revise, resubmit or reject.
2. Accept feedback
   Remember to calm down when you respond to reviewers' comments and points of critique. Reviewers typically only suggest changes to make your paper higher quality and more readable. Wait a day or two before you respond to the critique. Maybe discuss the points of criticism with your co-authors. Be polite in your reply.
3. Address all the reviewers' comments
   Make sure you respond to all the reviewers' comments. Not just the comments you agree with or are easy to add to the paper.

4. Track your changes
   When you take into account some of the reviewers' recommendations and points of critique remember to use track changes in your manuscript. It is important for the reviewer to see what have been added as new text in the new version of the paper.
5. Proofreading
   Relax and take your time. This is the last time you have the opportunity to change your paper before publication. Use the time needed. Don't rush. Make sure you find all the mistakes and errors in your papers.

Malene Roland
EFSUMB Publication Committee and Newsletter Editor