

SO YOU WANT TO PUBLISH A MANUSCRIPT?

Advice from the *Southern Medical Journal*

(official journal of the Southern Medical Association)

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Editor-in-Chief

And

Jennifer Price, MA, Managing Editor

Southern Medical Journal

The Presenters have no relevant Conflicts of Interest to disclose

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the proper and acceptable format and composition of a scientific manuscript
- Submit a manuscript that meets the AMA Manual of Style, and the specific journal's Instructions for Authors, and which is free from ethical concerns
- Revise a manuscript according to the recommendations of the reviewers and editors for improving the submission to a level commensurate with the journal's acceptance policies

Southern Medical Journal

- Multidisciplinary, interprofessional clinical articles
- Articles focus on clinical and educational issues in all specialties and disciplines in medicine
- More than a century of serving the clinical educational needs of healthcare providers
- Well respected, highly regarded expert reviewers and editorial boards
- Published for over 100 years
- National and International Editorial Boards of renowned professionals



Southern Medical Journal



Bioethics & Medical Education



Women's & Children's Health



Surgery & Surgical Specialties



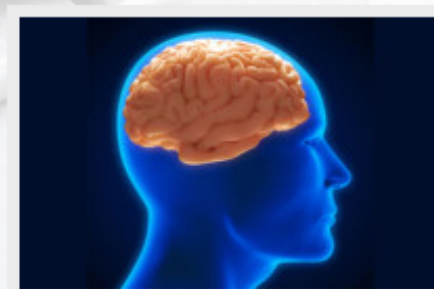
Medicine & Medical Specialties



Public Health & Environmental
Medicine



Quality Health Care, Patient
Safety, & Best Practices



Mental Health



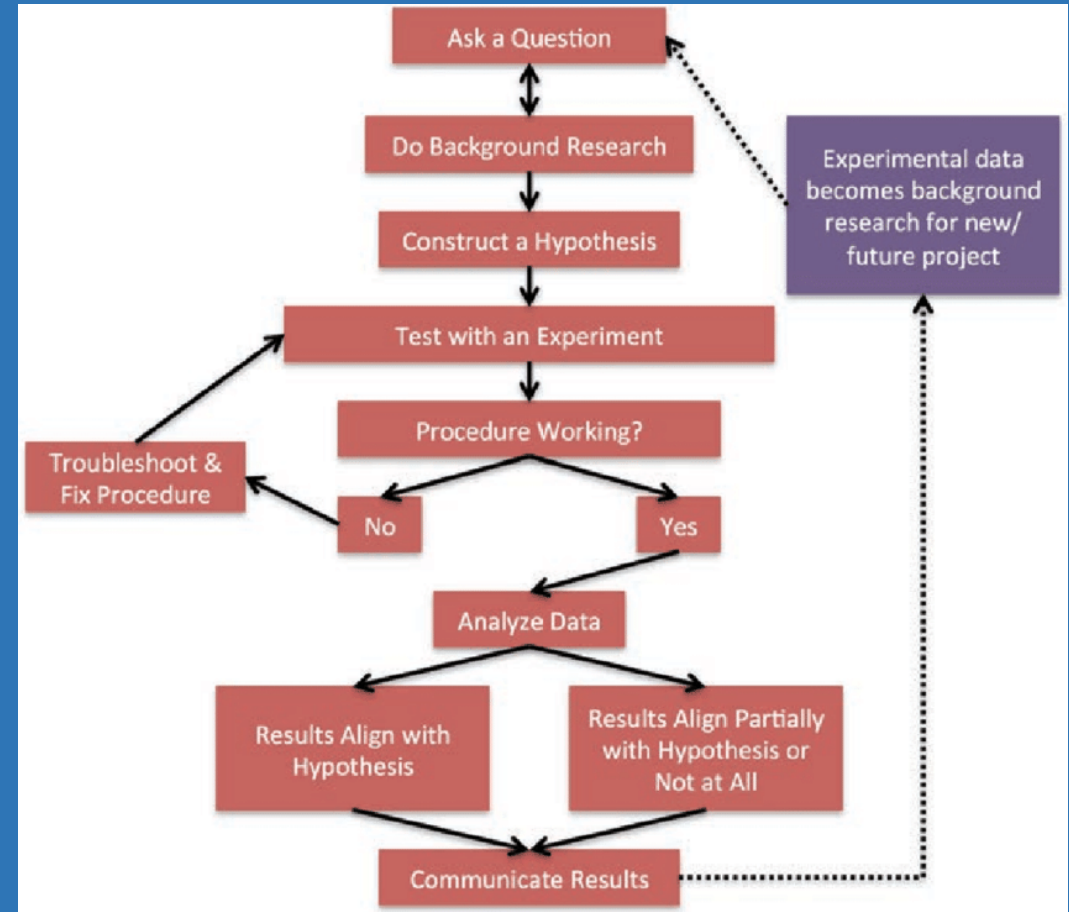
Emergency & Disaster Medicine

OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATION SUCCESS

- Comprehensive review of pertinent literature
- Proper scientific design and conduct of research study, including IRB approval
- Ensure first draft of manuscript complies with AMA Manual of Style, proper scientific grammar, and appropriate reporting of study introduction, methods and materials, results, discussion, conclusions
- Tables and figures, length of manuscript, headings and acknowledgements all following journal's Instructions for Authors
- Multiple revisions as appropriate
- Outside review of scientific grammar, spelling, technical writing skills, manuscript statistics, proper results and conclusions
- Submission via electronic journal process
- Response to editor's initial concerns
- Revisions per recommendations by expert reviewers
- Re-revise as needed and indicated
- (accept rejection if manuscript is deemed unacceptable)
- If accepted, review proofs and answer proofing queries
- Enjoy being published!

Publication Starts with Proper Design and Conduct of the Research Study

- Expansive review of literature
- Hypothesis
- Proper design of scientific method with appropriate statistics, primary and secondary outcomes
- Approval by IRB, or exemption
- Proper conduct of study
- Comprehensive analysis of data
- Compilation of results and development of conclusions
- Analysis of weaknesses and limitations of study



Draft the Manuscript

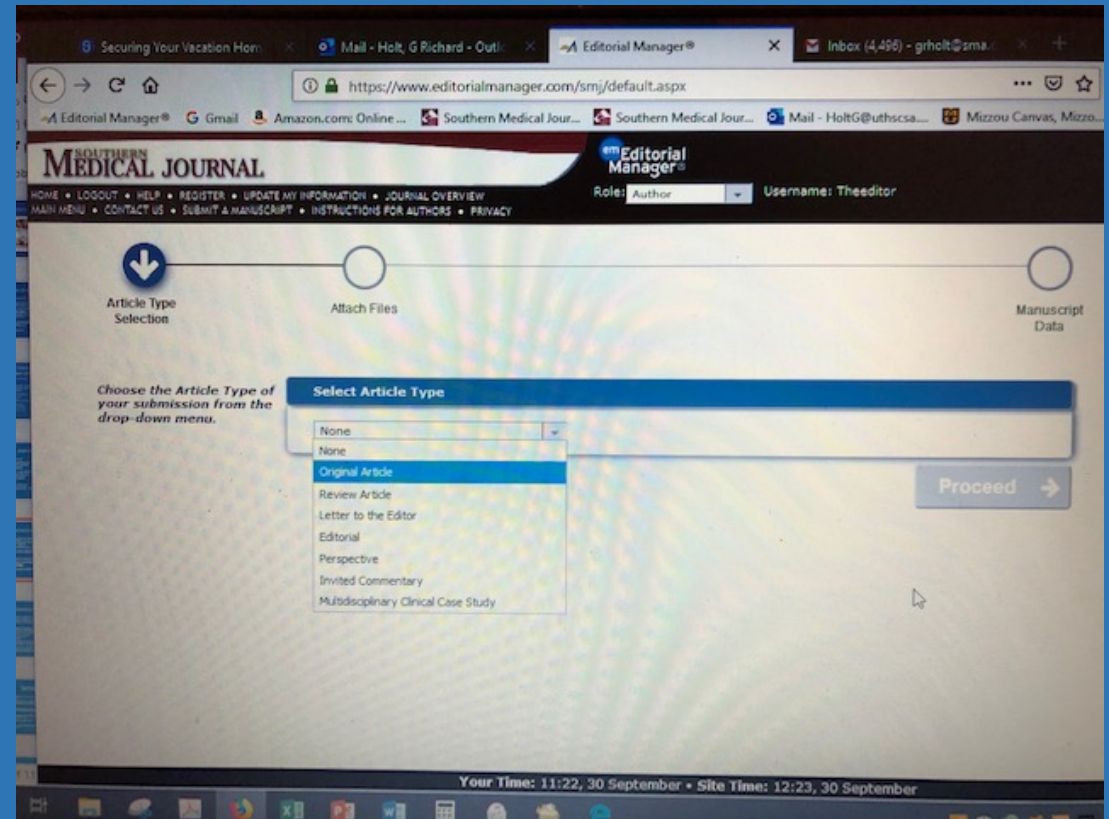
- Review and revision of manuscript by all authors, as well as experienced outside reviewer (institutional)
- Technical/grammar/spelling review by English-speaker if English is not authors' first language
- Most manuscripts, esp those produced by inexperienced writers, will likely require multiple revisions
- Pay particular attention to proper scientific grammar and composition



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Mechanics of the Manuscript


- Journals will usually have word length limits on different types of manuscripts: original, perspectives, commentaries, etc.
- Number of references may be limited, as well
- References should be noted in body of manuscript according to AMA Manual of Style. This manual is the best guide for scientific writing
- COI statement usually required on cover letter



Consideration of Journal Selection

- Selection of journal for submission of manuscript is related to topic of study, specialty/general interest, and mission of journal
- Extremely important to read the “Instructions for Authors” guidelines from the selected journal to comply – failure to comply is a common reason for return of submitted manuscript for revision before review
- Use AIMRad/C: abstract, introduction, M/M, Results, Discussion (conclusion)
- Be very wary of new, non-traditional, pay to publish journals which have no reputation in the medical community

Southern Medical Journal
Online Submission and Review System

 **Author Resources**
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[Author Permission Guidelines](#)
[WK Permissions Policy](#)

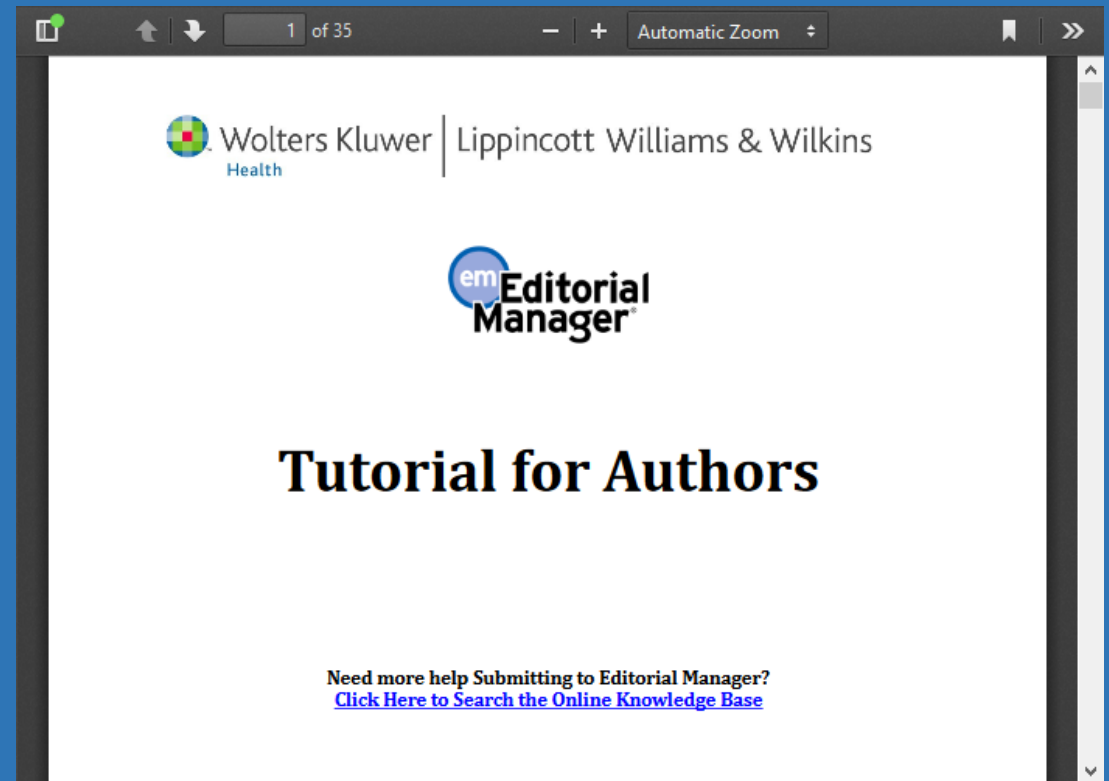
Author Resources

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***Please read the Instructions for Authors carefully prior to submitting a manuscript.
Submissions not adhering to the instructions will be returned for revision.***

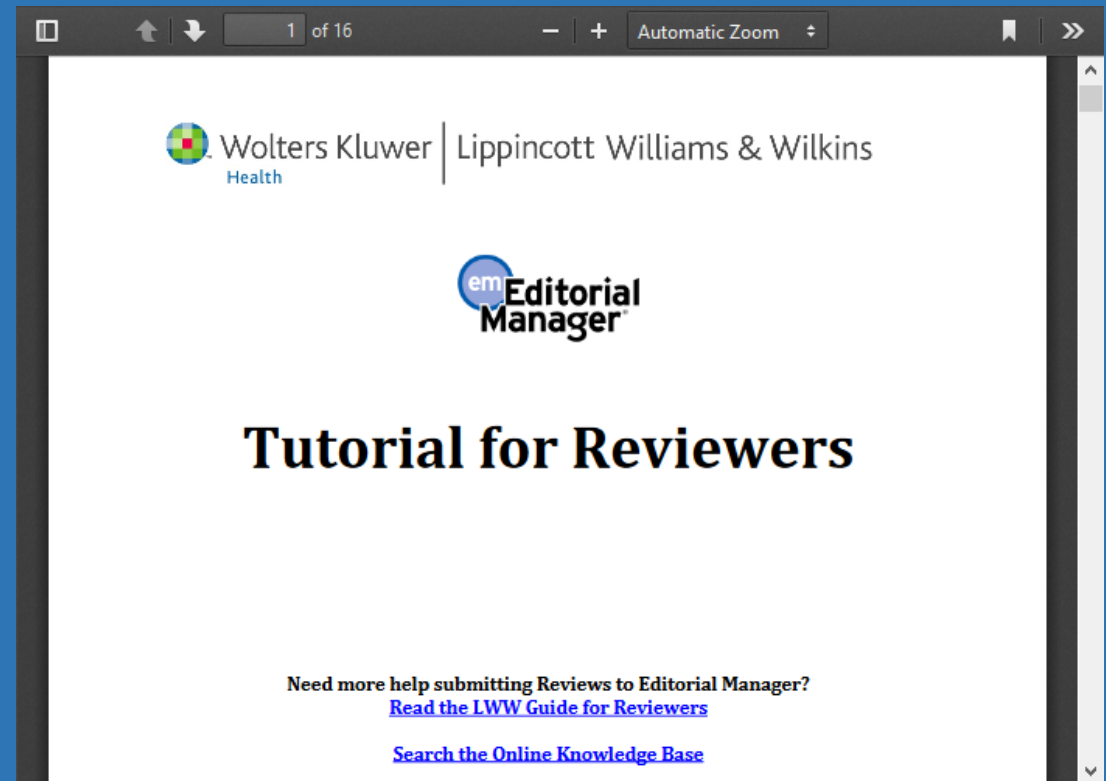
Electronic Submission

- All modern journals have an electronic submission process
- The process must be followed explicitly to ensure proper submission to the editorial office
- Very important to answer the ethics and conflicts of interest statements honestly and completely
- Insert appropriate keywords, titles, type of manuscript, authors, etc
- All authors will need to submit COI statements
- Author “tutorials” are available to learn accurate electronic submission



Editorial and Expert Review

- For the SMJ, there are multiple layers of Editorial and Expert reviews
- The Editorial Panel members are selected for their expertise, experience, and conduct of reviews
- Number of reviewers will vary from 1-3, depending on complexity of the topic and the study
- Reviewers are “rated,” so the editorial office chooses only the best
- Training for Reviewers is pre-scripted



Results of Review Process

- The recommendations of reviewers to the editor include:
 - Accept
 - Minor revisions
 - Major revisions
 - Reject
- Editor considers the opinions of the expert reviewers, along with his review, and decides upon the most appropriate decision for the manuscript
- Decision is conveyed to the author(s) electronically. If revisions are required, then the comments of reviewers are included, with the occasional recommendation of the editor attached, as well
- Author(s) will consider the comments and suggestions, and make revisions as they feel appropriate
- Revised manuscript, with author responses are resubmitted to Editorial Manager
- Editor reviews the responses, and managing editor forwards them to the reviewers for reconsideration
- Process continues until manuscript is deemed ready for acceptance...or if the revisions are inadequate for acceptance
- Rejection is tactfully conveyed to author(s) and a suggestion may be made for a more appropriate journal

Issues to Avoid

- POOR GRAMMAR and POOR SCIENTIFIC WRITING!
- Not following “Instructions for Authors”
- Submission a case report that is not a “Multidisciplinary Clinical Case Study”
- Poor study design, inappropriate statistics or analysis of stats, inaccurate or baseless conclusions
- Failure to respond appropriately to reviewer’s constructive comments and suggestions
- Inappropriate interactions and/or communications with journal editorial office

Three golden rules for responding to reviewer comments ¹

Respond completely

Respond politely

Respond with evidence

Ethical Issues in Scientific Publication

(from one who has seen it all)

- Failure to report conflicts of interest
- Plagiarism (a major reason for rejection or retraction)
- Fabrication or falsification of data
- Failure to include co-authors
- Submitting manuscript to multiple journals simultaneously
- Re-submission of previously published data
- Other scientific misconduct
- Potential actions by editors:
 - Notice to authors to clarify concerning information in manuscript
 - Exploration and investigation of allegations
 - Outright rejection due to violations
 - Corrections of data in subsequent issues
 - Notification of other journals if simultaneous submission
 - Retraction of article
 - Notification of institution of origin
 - An act taken with great consideration of impact on the authors

QUESTIONS BEFORE SELF-EVALUATION QUIZ
AND PRESENTATION FROM
MANAGING EDITOR
and Editor-Elect?

Self-Evaluation Question #1

- Which of the following represents the most acceptable technical guide for authors in preparing a manuscript for submission to a medical journal?
 - A. U.S. Medical Publishing Guide for Authors
 - B. AMA Manual of Style
 - C. NIH Guide for Scientific Publications in Research

THE CORRECT RESPONSE IS:

The AMA Manual of Style (11th edition out Jan 2020)

Self-Evaluation Question #2

- Which of the following is a major reason for rejection of a scientific manuscript for publication?
 - A. Incorrect order of manuscript headings
 - B. Failure to return a revised manuscript by the indicated deadline
 - C. Plagiarism

THE CORRECT RESPONSE IS:

Plagiarism

Self-Evaluation Question #3

Which of the following represents the proper primary intent of reviewers' comments and recommendations to authors?

- A. Improvement of the quality of the manuscript
- B. To educate the authors about the topic
- C. As a format to present the reviewers own opinions about the topic

THE CORRECT RESPONSE IS:

Improvement of the quality of the manuscript

Jennifer Price, MA
Managing Editor
Southern Medical Journal

Steven T. Baldwin, MD, MBA
Professor of Pediatric Emergency Medicine
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Editor-in-Chief Elect
Southern Medical Journal

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND
INTEREST

