

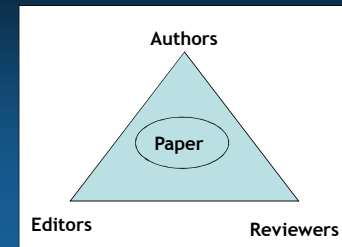
# Horse trading

The editorial process

## Objective of this session

Handle comments, suggestions and peer-reviewer comments to obtain acceptance in a peer-review journal

## The players



## Manuscript submission

- Format
  - Adhere to it
- Covering letter: An important piece
  - Objective: Getting past the 'gatekeeper'
  - Brief, highlight importance of paper
  - Do not brag, be modest
- Follow instructions of the journal

## Covering letter/checklist

- Signatures of all authors
  - Read and approved the contents
- Information on:
  - Prior publication of part/abstract
  - Presentation at conference
  - Financial or other conflicts of interest
  - Contact details of corresponding author
- Type of article the manuscript represents
- Any details that journal wants included

## Enclosures

- Transfer of copyright, other forms
- Permission
  - To reproduce previously published material
  - From patients for clinical photographs
- Keep copies of everything you submit

### The editorial office

- Receives the article
- Determines if the article is suitable
- Looks for compliance with instructions
  - Number of copies, signed statement, declaration
  - Electronic manuscript: format
- Allocates a number
- Acknowledges receipt
  - May ask for some more information

### Various methods of peer review

- Blinded
- Open
- Online

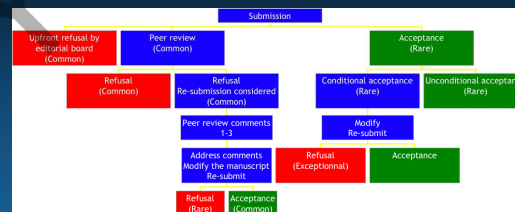
### Reviewers recommendations

- Not the final word
- Rejection, revision, accept
- Comments

### Final decision

- Multiple factors
  - Space, topicality, repetition
  - Interest to reader
  - Prior publication on the topic
- Communication

### Responses from journals



Peer review

### Three scenarios

- Acceptance
- Rejection
- Comments from reviewers

### Three scenarios

- Acceptance
  - Clarifications on minor points
    - Better photographs
    - Convert table/figure, change text
    - Provide key messages
    - Clarify points
    - Read proofs
- Rejection
- Comments from reviewers

### Three scenarios

- Acceptance
- Rejection
  - Comments provided can help improve the article
  - Useful to follow the same initial steps
- Comments from reviewers

### Rejection

- Submit elsewhere
- Appeal
  - Rarely
  - Only if you have a strong case
  - Biased reviewer, wrong major points

### How to appeal

- Politely
- Through a factual letter from senior author
  - Take time to phrase it correctly
  - Do not get into an argument
  - Only one effort should be made

### Three scenarios

- Acceptance
- Rejection
- Comments from reviewers
  - Revise in the light of comments
    - Major issues
    - Clarifications on methodology, results, statistics
    - Additional material in discussion
    - Remove/provide information
    - Change format of material

### Initial steps

- Read and understand carefully
- Number the points
- Divide in to
  - Agree
  - Disagree
- Require
  - Additional work
  - Simple

### Additional points

- Is there a time limit?
- Can it be done?

### Additional work and disagree

- Collect information
- Do the additional analysis
- Collect supporting evidence

### Prepare your response

- Simple and to the point
- Polite
- Provide enough supporting evidence
- Get approval from co-authors
- Revise paper

### Revising your paper

- Make alterations
- Detail them in your response
- Accurate
  - Specify page number, paragraph, line
- Additional references
- Alteration in tables and figures
- Re-check

### Submission

- Covering letter
- Point-wise reply to the reviewer's comments
- Original manuscript
- Revised manuscript
- Send well within deadline

### Addressing the points raised by the reviewer(s)

- When you will change the manuscript
  - Prefer that option
  - Just say: "We modified the manuscript according to the suggestion on line ... paragraph..."
- When you will not change the manuscript
  - Explanation / clarification to say you agree but that the manuscript does not need to be changed
  - Explanation / clarification to say you respectfully disagree, with documentation of your point

### Example: The second round of comments

- Dear XYZ
- Your above-referenced manuscript has been reviewed again. While the manuscript has been improved, further points must be addressed before it can be accepted for publication. Please consider the points raised below and make the requested changes or provide suitable rebuttal.

Additional 14 comments!!!

### Additional comments during the second round

- Why did you not do a 3 factor ANOVA??
- Do not report values in mg%.
- Do you mean mg/100mL?
- Figure 1 should be replaced with a scatter plot.
- The authors plot the 25(OH)D as a function of the log of PTH in Fig 1. It is unclear why they did this. This figure would be strengthened by plotting the absolute PTH values with 25(OH)D.

### Example: The THIRD round of comments

- Dear XYZ
- Your above-referenced manuscript has been reviewed again. While the manuscript has been improved, further points must be addressed before it can be accepted for publication. Please consider the points raised in the review(s) below and make the requested changes or provide suitable rebuttal.

NINE MORE COMMENTS!

### Additional comments during the THIRD round

- Make the image look crisp!
- 3-factor ANOVA should be better incorporated in the text
- 3-factor ANOVA should be reported in Tables also!!
- Was the difference between boys and girls for genu valgum significantly different from the difference between boys and girls for genu varum?

You wonder: Is this going to ever end?

### Message

- Are reviewers meant to try us?
- Respect their view
  - Do not unnecessarily capitulate
- Don't get into ego battles

### Accept

- Issues might still need to be resolved

## The proofs

- Advance copy of the formatted paper
- Various formats
  - Letter
  - Fax
  - PDF

Proofs

## Correcting the proofs

- Do not re-write
- Only fix errors
- Update addresses and references
- Ask other authors to double-check
- Read from the beginning
- Proof from the end
- Answer questions to the author
- Beware of re-writes from technical editors

## Mistakes to look for in the proofs (1)

- Names, initials and affiliations
- Formatting errors
- Typos
- Symbols
- Reference numbering
- Reference format

## Mistakes to look for in the proofs (2)

- Tables
  - Alignment
  - Totals
  - Calculations
  - Digit loss
- Figures
  - Re-drawn OK
  - No format loss

## Returning the proofs

- Handwritten comments
- Comments in separate document
- Edits on a PDF document
- Phone call

## Getting ready for the publication

- Final OK from technical editor
- Variable queuing delays
- Publication warning (in most cases)

### Communicating when a paper is published

- Notify co-authors
- Disseminate abstract
  - List servers
- Make press release
  - On the initiative of the journal (embargo)
  - On personal initiative

### Off-prints

- PDF
  - Beware of copy rights (you transferred it!)
  - May be provided free of charge
  - May be provided on-line for a charge
- Paper off prints
  - Free sets (Sometimes)
  - Sets for purchase

### After publication

- Answer letters to the editor
  - May be sent on-line only
  - May require a specific format
- Monitor citations
- Never read again (!)

### Take home messages

- Play the peer review game
- Negotiate with the editor
- Be compulsive at proof reading
- Enjoy the reward