# TIPS FOR JOURNAL SUCCESS

## EDITOR TRAINING PROGRAM

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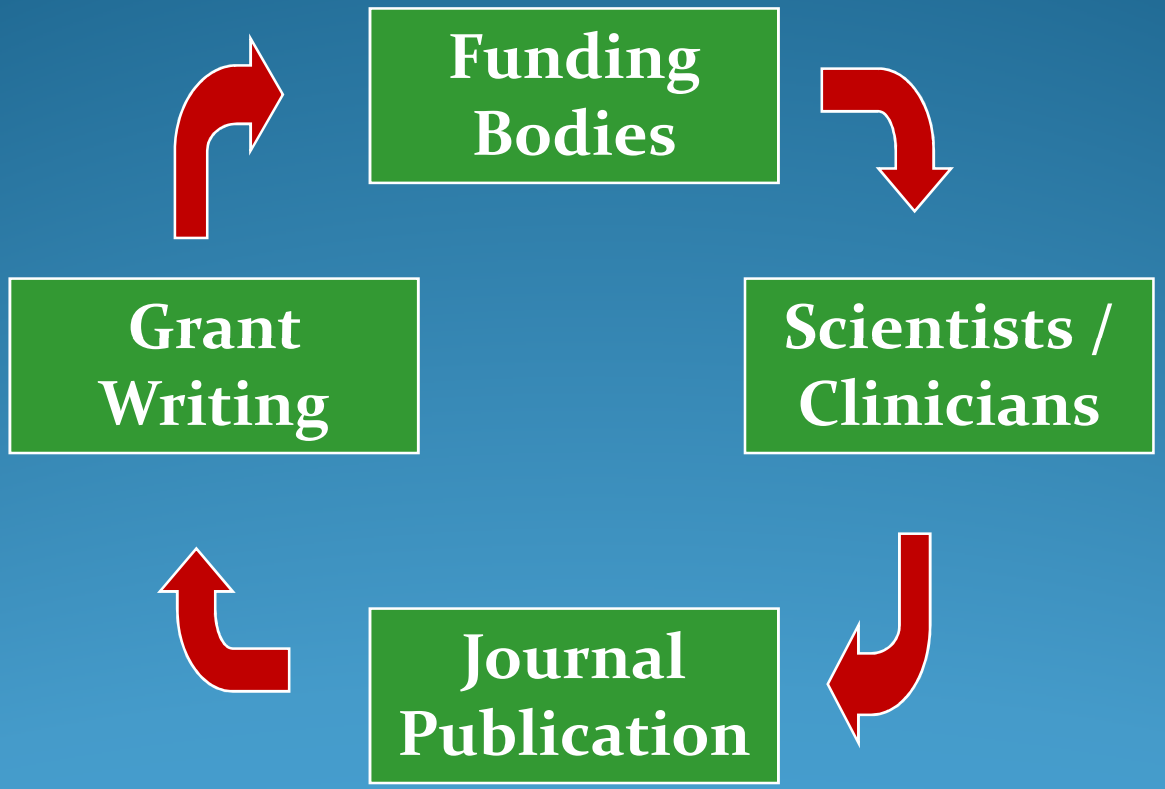
# Why do researchers need to publish?

- Scientists and clinicians publish their research findings and opinions to share them with the international research community

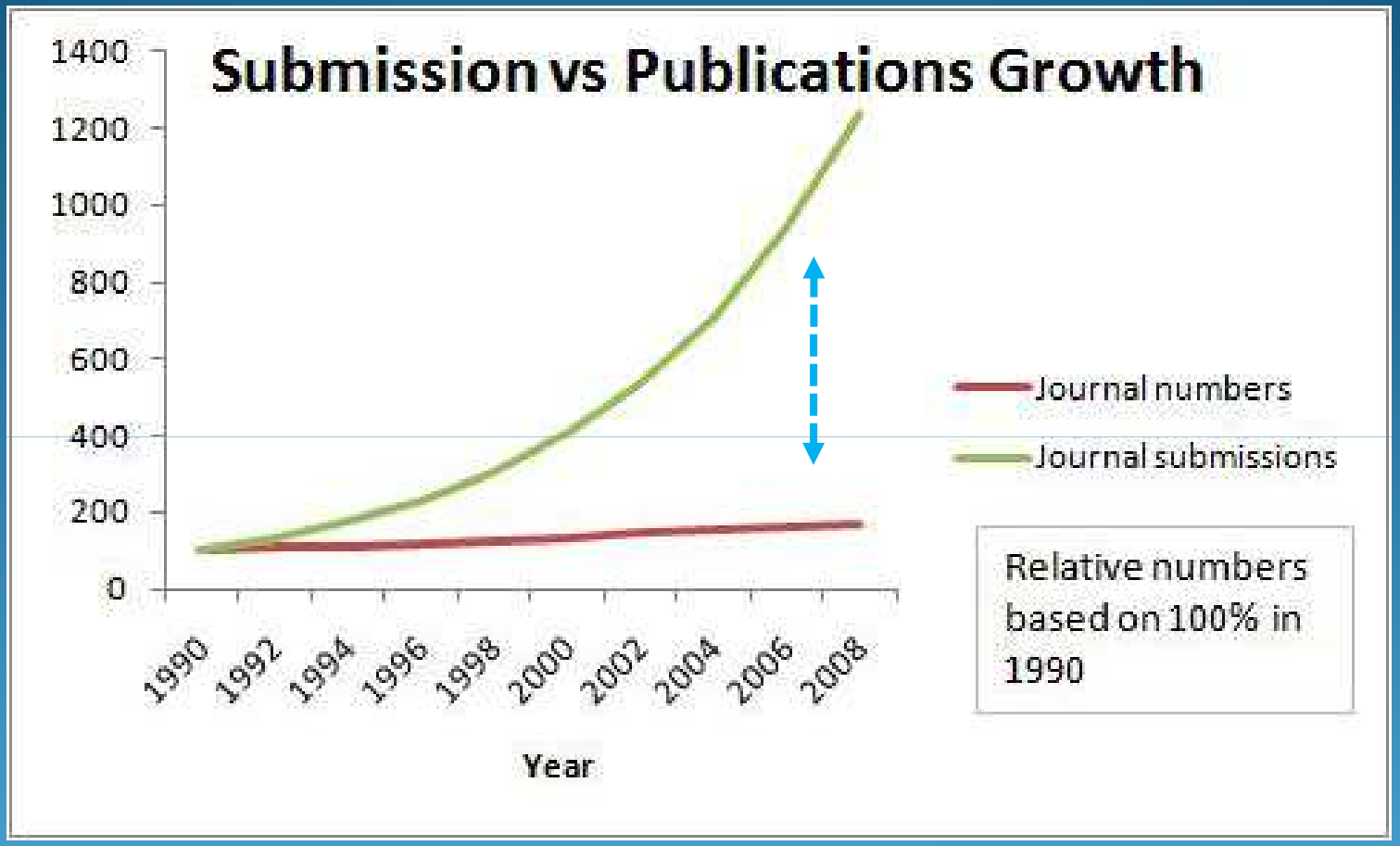
- Publication success is linked to funding success and career advancement

- Many PhD programmes require candidates to achieve a set number of peer-reviewed publications before the degree can be conferred

# Publish or perish…




*Regularly publishing research findings ensures ongoing grant support for new research*




*Comparison of the growth in the numbers of journal submissions with the growth in the number of journals*

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# How to identify hot topics

*Journal editors should want science that pushes new boundaries and opens up new fields of research*

- Look for clues to anticipate the next 'big thing'
- Read the literature broadly, particularly top-tier journals like *Nature*, *Science* and *Cell*, to identify 'fashionable' areas of research and 'new problems'
- Highlights and news articles
- Look for controversies and unexplained findings — these are fertile ground for scientific enquiry

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# How to identify hot topics

- Perform keyword database searches to determine volume and impact of recent research in a given area
- Attend international meetings for an awareness of new directions and developments

***However, greater interest means greater competition among journal editors for the most interesting new research***

- Thus, identify the main "movers" in the field and pursue them actively

**http://www.authormapper.com**

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# What should journal editors want

*Good quality science!*

- Robust to peer review
- Well designed and executed original (novel!) research
- Findings of interest to the journal's readership
- Work in an active research area (=citations!)
- Work that advances the field in some way
- Compliance with ethical regulations
- Clear, concise writing that conveys results and their implications

# Study design

*A good study should:*

- Have a hypothesis or research question
- Use appropriate methods and controls
- Have a large enough sample size
- Use appropriate statistical tests
- Have no investigator or patient bias
- Comply with ethical requirements
- Be registered (clinical studies)

www.ich.org/LOB/media

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# Publication types

- Full-length papers
- Rapid communications
- Short communications
- Letters to the editor
- Case reports
- Technical notes
- Laboratory notes
- Methods
- Editorials
- Opinion pieces
- Review articles (often highly cited)

*Clearly set out the guidelines and requirements for each publication type in your journal's Guide for Authors*

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# Special Issues

- Your chance to publish a collection of articles on "the state" of a given field
- Suitable for fields that have recently seen a large amount of activity, with exciting new findings emerging around the same time
- Need to be in touch with the researchers and know what stage their work is at
- Consider inviting a guest editorial from a senior researcher in the field

Can lead to high citations and link your journal to that field

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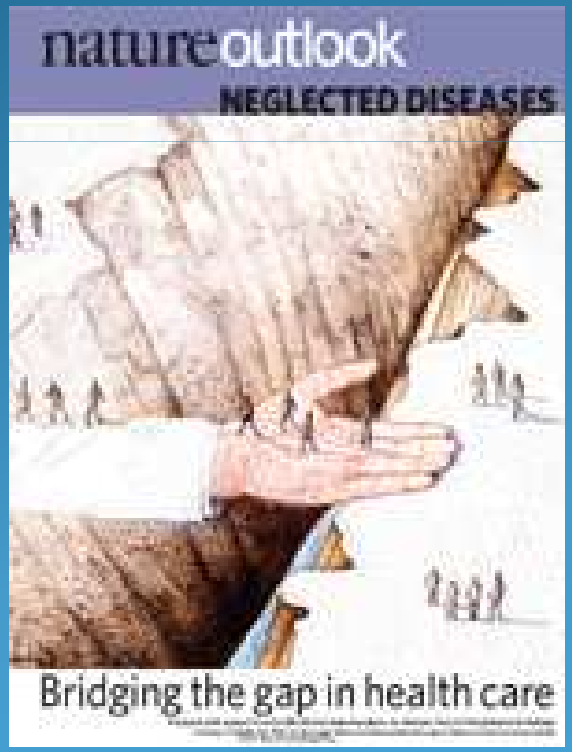
# Special Issues

- For example, *Nature* publishes Insights, Outlooks, Collections and Technology features

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# Ethics: good practice

Unethical behaviour by researchers can damage your journal's reputation

*Examples of unethical behaviour:*

- Multiple submissions
- Redundant publications
- Plagiarism
- Data fabrication and falsification
- Improper use of human subjects and animals in research
- Improper author contribution

# Appointing reviewers

*Peer review exists to ensure that a paper is as scientifically robust and complete as possible before joining the 'collective knowledge' as part of the literature*

- Reviewers must be objective and independent as well as being experts in the field
- Consider requested inclusions and exclusions carefully and appoint a balance of appropriate experts
- Inconsistencies among reports must be considered on the basis of possible biases: if in doubt, appoint more reviewers
- Consider a double-blind review process

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# Why is good writing important?

- Well written papers attract readers and the submission of additional well written papers
- They will also be cited more than papers that are too difficult to read
- Poorly written papers are a major source of frustration for peer reviewers, who might turn down future requests to review a paper from journal if sent poorly written work

# Elements of good scientific writing

*Good writing possesses the following three "C"s:*

- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Correctness (accuracy)

*The key is to be as brief and specific as possible without omitting essential details*

# Traps to avoid

**Good writing avoids the following traps:**

- Repetition
- Redundancy
- Ambiguity
- Inconsistency
- Spelling and grammatical errors
- Insufficient detail/vagueness

**These are common annoyances for peer reviewers and readers**

# Hyphens

*Hyphenation is used to join ordinarily separate words into compound words*

Incorrect use of compound adjectives can lead to ambiguity

*“calcium-induced calcium release”*

has a different meaning from

*“calcium induced calcium release”*

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# Hyphens

*"Glutamate receptors mediated synaptic plasticity..."*

Tells the reader that Glu receptors are involved in the development of synaptic plasticity

*"Glutamate receptor-mediated synaptic plasticity..."*

Identifies synaptic plasticity involving Glu receptors as the subject of the sentence

- *NB/ nouns used within compound adjectives to modify another noun should be used in the singular form*

# That/which

*"Data were normalised to the housekeeping gene actin, which was used as an internal reference..."*

Here, the "which" refers to actin, which is therefore the subject of the following clause

*"Data were normalised to the internal reference housekeeping gene actin, revealing increases in the levels of..."*

To refer to the analyzed data in a subsequent clause, "which revealed" would be inappropriate and introduce an ambiguity

# Making comparisons

*Frequently made in the results sections of papers*

- Compare "like" with "like"
- Do not leave the reader to make an assumption

*"Expression levels of p53 in smokers were compared with non-smokers"*

should actually be

*"Expression levels of p53 in smokers were compared with those in non-smokers"*

# Keep it simple!

*The use of simple language is often clearer, more precise and more concise than using more complex terms*

- Use as few words as possible
- Delete superfluous words
- Avoid circular sentences, redundancies and repetition

*"In order to examine differences in protein levels, lysates were subjected to 10% SDS-PAGE and Western blotting using an anti-NR1 antibody, to observe the effects of stimulation on receptor trafficking"*

# Phrase checks

*What can you do to check if a certain phrase is correct or if it might be worded better?*

- Get help from a colleague
- Google (http://www.google.cn)
- Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.cn)
- Exemplar (http://www.springerexemplar.com)

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# Conclusions

*The key to improving your journal's impact factor and expanding its readership:*

- Publish studies that follow the rules for SUCCESS

**S**tudy design appropriate

**U**npublished elsewhere (novel)

**C**lear, concise, accurate writing

**C**ompliance with author guidelines

**E**thics complied with

**S**tatistics appropriate

**S**ignificance explained