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**PLACE
SPIRIT
HEART**

**Exploring Experiences
of Ageing**

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Writing for Publication

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Australasian Journal on Ageing

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Australasian Journal on Ageing

Contents

- Why publish?
- Getting started
- Tools : working abstracts and mind maps
- Working with journal editors and reviewers
- Tips for success

Why publish?

- Knowledge translation
- Connect and communicate with other stakeholders
- Receive peer feedback
- Career progression

- “Seeing your name in print is such an amazing concept: you get so much attention without having to actually show up somewhere.... There are many obvious advantages to this . You don’t have to dress up, for instance , and you can't hear them boo you straight away” - Anne Lamott 1994



First steps

- Uniform requirements (ICMJE) www.icmje.org
- Instructions for many journals via Central Medical College of Ohio website www.mco.edu/lib/instr/libinsta.html
- Style guide e.g. Vancouver

- Authorship
 - Author order
 - Formal policy
 - “the money, fame and happiness document”

Writing: Best practice guidelines

- www.equator-network.org
- CONSORT for RCTs and cluster RCTs
- STARD for diagnosis studies
- STROBE for observational studies
- PRISMA for systematic reviews
- COREQ for qualitative interviews, focus groups
- Consider appropriate theoretical framework for qualitative projects

How to write for scientific journals

- Plentiful resources e.g.:
- Peat J et al. Scientific Writing - easy when you know how. BMJ Books, 2002. ISBN 0-7279-1625-4
- Chipperfield et al. Authors submission toolkit. Current Medical Research and Opinion 2010; 26: 1967-1982



Tips

- Write for a specific audience and journal
- Start with a 20 word main message
- Be coherent and logical
- Get good feedback before you submit

Choosing a Journal

When do you choose a journal?



Choosing a journal

- Impact Factor
 - Be aspirational-always aim higher
- Potential acceptance
 - Will you cite this journal?
 - Check you reference list
- Scope of journal
 - Consider instructions for authors, previous issues and whether your manuscript is similar in content, methodology and importance

Choosing a journal

- Audience
 - Who do you want to get this message to?
 - Think beyond your own discipline
- Speed of response
 - How long will you wait for your answer?
- Speed of publication
 - What is the current backlog?

Choosing a journal

- Publication mode
 - Can you pay for open access?
 - Are you OK with on-line only?
- Copyright considerations
 - Check the fine print

Task

- Write a list of the potential journals for a current paper and justify why each is a good choice
- Prioritise this list, then ensure you have the author guidelines to follow for formatting and style

Australasian Journal on Ageing

Scope of journal

- *Australasian Journal on Ageing* is the official English language journal of the Australian Association of Gerontology, Aged and Community Services Australia, Australian Council on the Ageing, and the Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine, and publishes original research articles dealing with any area of gerontology and geriatric medicine

Types of papers

- **i. Original Research Articles**
3,000 words, 30 references, 5 figures/ tables
Full-length reports of quality current research within any area of gerontology and geriatric medicine
- **ii. Brief Reports**
1,500 words, 20 references, 2 figures/ tables
Brief research reports of pilot work or small studies
- **iii. Review Articles**
4,000 words, 50 references, 5 figures/tables
Comprehensive, systematic analyses of the literature in specific research areas related to gerontology or geriatric medicine.

Types of papers

- **iv. Innovation and Translation**

3,000 words, 20 references, 5 figures/tables

Submissions concerning innovative policy and practice initiatives and critical examination of existing policy and practice across the spectrum of ageing and aged care

- **v. Letters to the Editor**

400 words, 10 references, 1 figure/table

Offer perspective to content published in the Journal or information critical to an area of ageing

- **viii. Reflection**

30 lines for poetry/1000 words for stories

Poems or stories (fiction or non-fiction) related to any aspect of ageing

Tools for preparing an article

- The main message
- The working abstract
- The mind map

What's the main message?

- Use 20 words or less
- The message should be 'news'
- A paper should only have ONE main message



The working abstract

- Write your main message
- Produce a title that encapsulates the main message
- Write a 5 sentence abstract
 - What you did
 - Why you did it
 - What you found
 - Implications for theory
 - Implications for practice

The working abstract

- What were the aims ? (link to main message)
 - Use introduction to argue the aims
- How did you collect the data?
 - Methods section provides details of data collection related to the aims
- Results
 - How do the findings answer/address the aims
- Discussion
 - Use key findings to deliver the main message

Mind maps

- Mind mapping is a common form of information processing . It helps to
 - counter writers' block
 - organise thoughts or ideas
 - gather thoughts and ideas before starting to write
- A mind map is a web-like structure of words and ideas that are loosely tied to one another
- Start with a large sheet of paper
- Write your main message in the middle
- Now write around the main message all the other things that you can think of

Mind mapping

- Use free association to start ideas flowing. Record what comes to mind. As you generate thoughts, draw branches from the main topic.
- Be concise with choice of words for your map. Write single words or simple phrases.
- Continue branching. Make more branches off main topic. Try to extend thoughts from one idea to next. Draw lines between thoughts to create lateral thinking.
- As new ideas come forth, draw additional branches from topic. Expand as necessary.
- Repeat branching until all your ideas appear on the map.
- When you are finished mapping, carefully study connections that you have made and try to refine relationships. What larger patterns have you uncovered?
- Now you can decide what to keep for your article and what you don't need



Writing style and format

- Refer to author guidelines!
 - Use referencing system and apply correct referencing style
 - Check references are complete
- Short and simple words, sentences, paragraphs
- Nouns and verbs
- Word order
 - ‘This systematic review of 12 studies examine factors related to non-transportation of older people who have fallen by ambulance services to ED’

Pre-submission Peer feedback

- Get someone to read your draft
- This is particularly helpful if your first language isn't English
- *Eg, 'dementia is the biggest sanitary problem in the Western world'*



Keeping editors and reviewers happy

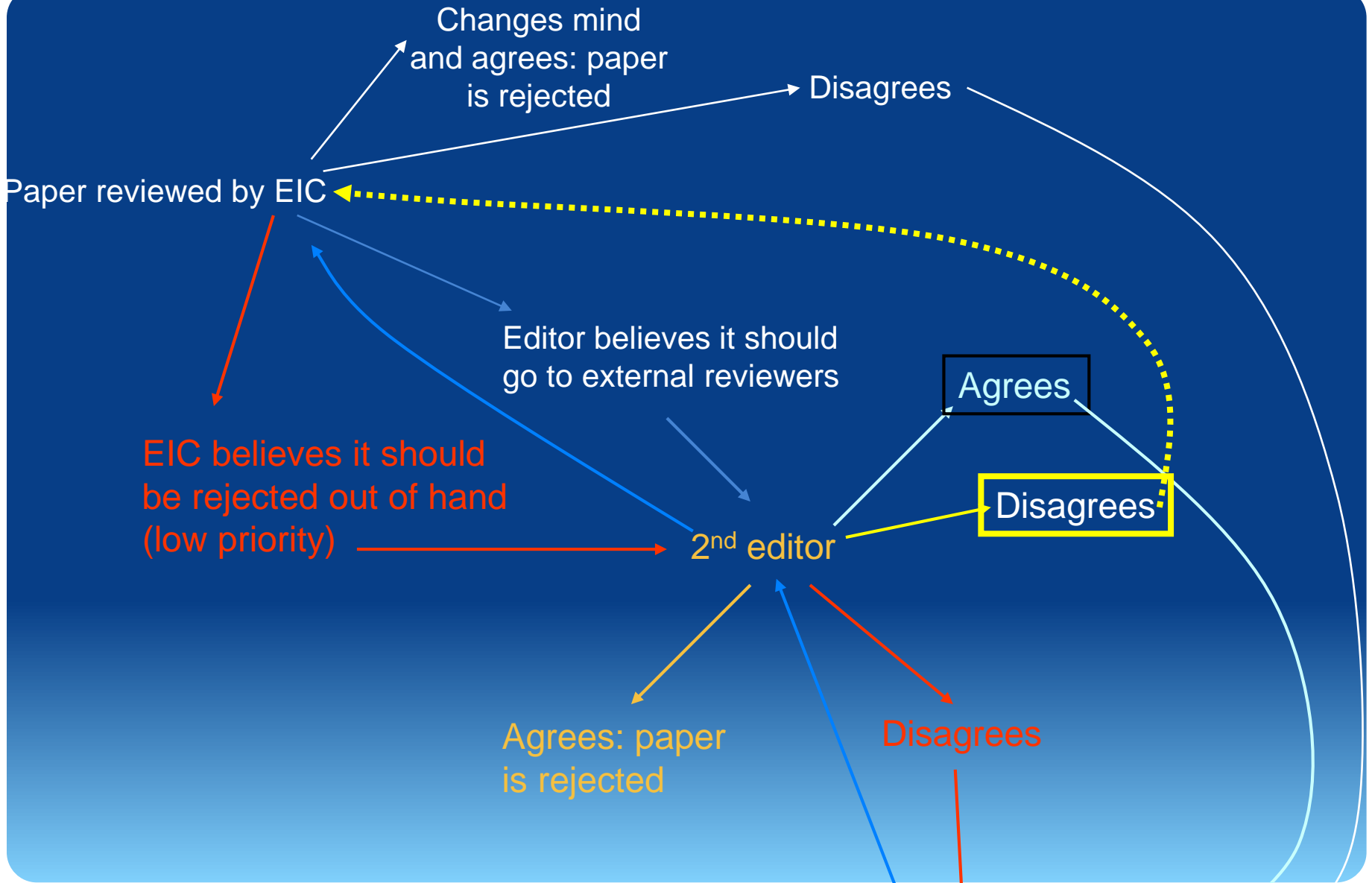
- Check whether in scope
- Communicate with Editor – check whether in scope
- Cover letter
 - sell your main message
 - highlight how your research builds on other papers the journal has published,
- Cite the journal

Keeping editors and reviewers happy

- The main message should be news
- Choose an appropriate journal
- Prepare paper using best practice and journal guidelines
- Write coherently and logically
- Get someone to read paper before submission
- Use your cover letter and the abstract to sell your paper

What to do with the feedback

- Chances are you'll get some kind of rejection
 - the 1st time you submit
- However, a rejection might not be a rejection
 - Often invited by journal editor to make changes to your manuscript and resubmit
- You need to be patient
 - it can take awhile to get the reviewers' comments
 - two-three months



What to do with the feedback

- Many reviewers are courteous and try to be helpful.
- You may get comments which you believe to be unfair
- You may have to write two or even three revised versions of your article before it's finally accepted

Responding to Reviewer Comments

- In cover letter thank the editor for the opportunity to revise and resubmit.
- Answer EACH critique/comment made by reviewers.
- Highlight changes in the revised paper
 - Or as the journal instructs
- Be courteous. A good idea is to start your response with, “Thank you for this thoughtful suggestion...”
 - that is, if you think it is thoughtful

Responding to Reviewer Comments

- If you disagree, but it is easy to change and it does not affect the science...do it!
- If you disagree entirely and believe it is scientifically sound, explain why.
 - Respectfully

Don't give up !

People who have never published before often have a number of mistaken ideas about publishing.

Common misconceptions

Misconception

- ‘Everyone else writes better than me—look how beautifully written the articles in this journal are’

Reality

- Articles are redrafted and rewritten.

Misconception

- ‘If my article is rejected it means my work’s no good’

Reality

- It does not necessarily mean this.
 - Reviewers should provide direction if there are methodological concerns that need to be addressed.
 -
- High impact journals have extremely high rejection rates.

Common misconceptions (2)

Misconception

- 'If my articles rejected by one journal, that means no journal will accept it'

Reality

- Most everyone has had article rejected by one journal, but accepted by another
- Does not mean automatically sending article unchanged somewhere else.
 - Read reviewers comments carefully, then decide whether to change the article and resubmit it to another journal.

Replying to Reviewer Comments

- Journal's wishes trumps your wishes!
- Editors have a responsibility to the journal and the readers
- The reviewers may not agree with each other
- The editors will decide on what they think is important and what is not
- Address everything even if no changes are made

Replying to Reviewer Comments

- Deconstruct each of the messages into individual items that you can respond to
- Try and make the majority of the changes requested
- If the reviewers has asked a question or makes a point – think if the manuscript will be improved by including/editing text even if not explicitly asked for by the reviewer
- Give reasons if don't accept suggestions
- Polite and pragmatic

Format

- Cover letter
- Use table form with 4 columns: Number, Reviewer's comment, Location, Amendment

No	Reviewer's Comments	Location	Amendment
1	"active group" may not be best term	Throughout	term changed to "intervention group"
2	It remains unclear why the authors have chosen these risk factors for institutionalization.	Page 9	<p>The risk factors have been chosen based on previous studies that have identified factors for institutionalization</p> <p>The following text has been included: <i>"These predictors have been identified based on the clinical significance...."</i></p>

“Agree but nothing you can do about it”

- *How did you assess self-report information in individuals with cognitive impairment? How can you assure validity of such information?*
- We thank the reviewer for raising this point. Unfortunately, we cannot assure the validity of self-report information amongst individuals with cognitive impairment. Moreover, it would be impractical to check this in the study sample. However, we have added the following comment in the Discussion section, study limitations, page 21:

“Meeting half-way”

- *The long section on ZZ is not useful in the introduction. The paragraphs should be deleted..*
- This section has been shortened but not removed because one of the studies forms the basis of our hypothesis that.....

“Reviewer was not clear”

- *If sampling was by residential area, then there is a potential statistical issues to do with cluster design*
- we apologise for unintentionally being misleading. This study was not a cluster design and we have altered our wording accordingly. Participants were selected who lived within a specified distance from the hospital. This has been made clear.

“Let the Editors decide”

- *In my opinion, Figure 3 could be deleted.*
- Figure 3 defines the allergen avoidance intervention in detail, as figure 4 does the diet intervention. We have retained the figure but are happy for it to be deleted if the editor wishes to do this.

“You think you are correct and do not want to edit”

- *Statistical analyses: what was the rationale to include variables had $p < 0.25$ in the multivariate analyses?*
- The significance cut-off of $p < 0.25$ or $p < 0.20$ is acceptable cutoff to rule in covariates to include in the multivariate model. A number of studies have used this significance cutoff [1-3].