

# Editor's Roundtable: VERITY 2024

**Kelli Allen, PhD**

**Daniel H. Solomon, MD, MPH**

**Josef Smolen, MD**



# Outline

- . Preparing your manuscript for submission -- Kelli
- . Review of manuscripts -- Dan
- . Revising manuscripts based on reviews – Josef
- . Q&A

# PREPARING YOUR MANUSCRIPT FOR SUBMISSION

**Kelli D. Allen, PhD**

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UNC  
THURSTON ARTHRITIS  
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# PREPARING YOUR MANUSCRIPT FOR SUBMISSION

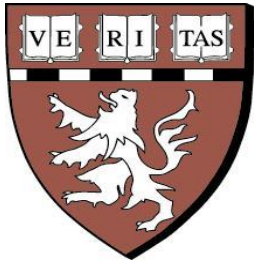
## Selecting a journal

- Does journal have the correct readership?
  - What audience would you like to reach?
- Does journal have the appropriate “selectivity”?
- Communication with editorial team may be helpful if you aren’t sure about fit
- Other issues:
  - Submission process
  - Turn-around times
  - Impact of journal in your field (IF, altmetrics, etc)
  - Options for manuscript formats
  - # words, # tables/figures, # references
  - Dissemination / social media / promotion offerings?

# PREPARING YOUR MANUSCRIPT FOR SUBMISSION

## **Review & follow author guidelines**

- Communicate with journal staff if needed prior to submission
- Keep readership in mind as you write
- Obtain critical review prior to submission
  - Overall clarity and quality of writing
  - Clear innovation & impact?
  - Methodological rigor



# Reviewing Manuscripts

**Daniel H. Solomon, MD, MPH**

Editor-in-Chief, Arthritis & Rheumatology

Professor of Medicine

Liang Distinguished Chair in Arthritis & Population Health

Harvard Medical School

Brigham and Women's Hospital

Division of Rheumatology



# Some general questions to ask yourself

- Do I have the skill set to review a given article?
- Do I have the time to perform a timely and thorough review?
  - 2-4 week turnaround
  - 2-5 hours
- Am I interested in the topic and the methods?
- Do I read/publish in the journal?

# Performing a good review

- The reviewer is not the final arbiter
- The reviewer's job is to judge:
  - Novelty/innovation
  - Validity of methods
  - Importance of results
  - Other issues: ethics, etc
- Reviewer's goal should be to advance science through ensuring high-quality publications
- Not, that the authors are „wrong“
- Suggesting a rejection is fine as there are many journals



# Reviewer: Nuts and Bolts 1

- Is the science novel?
  - Reviewer may need to spend some time reviewing the literature
  - Novelty can be based on topic, methods, patient population, etc
  - Subjective judgment by experts
- Is the science valid?
  - Reviewer needs to understand the methods well enough to be able to judge
  - If methods are not clear, ask authors to clarify
- Are results important?
  - Practice changing?
  - Important advance in science?
  - Subjective judgment by experts

# Reviewer: Nuts and Bolts 2

- Timely response keeps the system of academic publishing moving; ask for extension if needed
  - 2-4 weeks is typical
- Ethical concerns should go to Editor (not author)
- „General comments“ (numbered) followed by „Specific comments“
- Reviewer’s job is not editorial

# Revising your manuscript based on reviews

Josef S. Smolen

Medical University of Vienna and  
Hietzing Hospital, Vienna, Austria



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY  
OF VIENNA



# Some general thoughts...

- The review process always involves more than one referee to allow for a spectrum of opinions and, consequently, the decision usually reflects the overall (“average“) judgement
- Reviewers have been sought for and elected by the editors based on their expertise
- Reviewers are volunteers who read and think about your paper free of charge
- Reviewers usually see their activity as a service to a journal and to the authors for the advancement of science
- Therefore, reviewers deserve greatest respect and gratefulness
- Reviewers are not enemies, but partners who critically assess and help to improve your paper
  - There may be exceptions to this rule, but these are rare
  - I have rarely seen reviewer comments that did not help improve a paper – my own ones or other ones
- Occasionally, reviewers (and editors!) may err...
  - If you feel so, send a rebuttal, but...
  - Not always is what looks like a nice review a recommendation to accept a paper...

# When you have the opportunity to revise your paper...

- Read the reviews carefully
- See the review as an attempt to improve your paper
- Try to follow all of the reviewers' suggestions
- Prepare a point-by-point response
  - Repeat the reviewers' comments and SEPARATE your RESPONSE CLEARLY from this comment
  - Or use a Table where you repeat each of the referees' suggestions in one column and provide your response in a separate one next to it, such as:

Item	Comment/Critique	Response/Change made	Change on
Rev. 3, Pt. 1	The authors should clarify...clarify...	We have now...we have now...“bla.blo..blu“	P. 9, L. 7-10
Rev. 3, Pt. 2	Table 1 should include...include...	As suggested, we have changed...changed...	Table 1...

- Indicate where you made changes (page #, line # or paragraph #) – can be done in the response column or in an adjacent one
  - In your response, repeat the actual textual changes that you made in the revised version of your paper for easier comprehension
- Be polite
  - If you think that a point in the review should not be followed in full detail, explain why you feel so

## Some further aspects...

- If a reviewer asks for some additional data which you may have, don't tell the reviewer that you keep them for another paper – provide them!!
  - Not infrequently such responses come in revisions of clinical trial papers and are driven by the respective company, wishing to keep the data for a separate publication - like: “this is beyond the scope of this paper...“. → This is an UNACCEPTABLE attitude
- If a reviewer asks for additional data which you do not have, they are either
  - a prerequisite and new experiments need to be done (time is usually not an issue for editors), or
  - not absolutely necessary, then explain why they are not available (cannot be made available)
- If you feel that a review is malicious, let the editor know why you feel so...
  - This is rare but can happen and may not be immediately recognized
- Good luck with your revisions!!