Scientific Publishing 101:
How to Choose a Journal, Negotiate Author Issues, and Get Your Paper Ready to Submit

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Webinar Overview

- Introduction
- How to choose a journal
  - Audience
  - Type of paper
  - Prestige vs. acceptance
- Authorship perils and perks
- The last tasks before you submit your paper
  - Title
  - Key words
  - Acknowledgements
- Your questions
Remember This?

Four Steps to Getting Started Writing A Professional Scientific Paper

- Get organized
  - Main evaluation question
  - Single, Over-riding Communications Objective (SOCO) or elevator speech
  - Analyses, results, tables and figures

- Know where you’re going
  - What type of paper are you writing?
  - For which journal?

- Make an outline, section by section

- Write, then edit, and edit some more (and again)

Main Principle to Remember

- Reach your intended audience

- 3 ways:
  - Journal choice
  - Title
  - Key words
Many Potential Journals for Tobacco-Related Papers

Choose the Right Journal for Your Paper

- **Guiding principle:** Reach the right audience
- **Fields:** Public health, biomedical, psychological, social science, basic science, statistical
- **Audience:** U.S., U.S. + Europe, International
- **Focus:** Public health, chronic disease, tobacco-specific, addiction, nursing, medicine
- **Content:** Public health, clinical, epidemiological, behavioral, environmental
How to Start Your Search for the Right Journal

- Check the references section in your paper or proposal—where are most significant references published?
- Check Medline
- Review your template paper or the leading paper on your topic—check those references for suggestions
- Ask your colleagues, mentors

Choose the Right Journal for Your Paper

- Does your article fit the journal?
  - Check word count, length requirements
    - Full article
    - Brief, concise communication
    - Data letter
    - Commentary or descriptive paper
- Timing
  - Does your paper have time-sensitive information?
  - How soon will the journal respond?
Choose the Right Journal for Your Paper

- **Open access:** The full text of your paper is available to everyone free
  - Important if your audience is public health practitioners without access to scientific journal subscriptions
  - Some journals are not default open-access, but offer this option for a charge to authors (average $3,000 per article)
  - Examples of open-access journals:
    - Biomed Central family of journals
      - *Addiction Science and Clinical Practice*
      - *BMC Public Health*
      - *Tobacco Induced Diseases*
    - *Preventing Chronic Disease* published by CDC
  - Beware of “fake” open-access journals
    - Not indexed in PubMed
    - Charge high fees to authors and promise quick acceptance
Choosing a Scientific Journal—How Important is Prestige?

- **Competition**
  - Highly competitive journals vs. very likely to be published?

- **Journal selectivity and the sequence of submission**
  - Aim high, go lower?
  - Or, go for the “sure thing” first?

- **Cautions about prestigious journals**
  - Could result in very long time to publication
  - Access is changing now with many good journals online

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Prestige and the Journal’s Impact Factor

“The impact factor ratio” = number of citations in 1 year for all articles in that journal, divided by the number of articles published in the journal in the last 2 years

Average number of times that an article from that journal is cited
Public Health Journals With Highest Impact Factors, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Journal and impact factor</th>
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<th>Journal and impact factor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Annu Rev Public Health (8.609)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Environ Health Res (3.500)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Environ Health Perspec (6.087)</td>
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<td>Occup Environ Med (3.494)</td>
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<td>Bull World Health Organ (5.469)</td>
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<td>Prev Med (3.299)</td>
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<td>J Toxicol Environ Health B (4.041)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>J Adolescent Health (3.116)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Am J Public Health (3.850)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tob Control (3.077)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Scand J Env Health (3.540)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Public Health Genom (3.049)</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Journal Citation Reports (JCR) Journal rankings sorted by impact factor. http://www.sciencegateway.org/rank/index.html

International Public Health: Moderately Competitive

- American Journal of Health Promotion
- American Journal of Public Health
- American Journal of Preventive Medicine
- Annals of Behavioral Medicine
- Annual Review of Public Health
- BMC Public Health
- European Journal of Public Health
- Health Affairs
- Health Education Quarterly
- Journal of Public Health Policy
- Journal of Public Policy
- Medical Care
- Preventing Chronic Disease
- Preventive Medicine
- Public Health Reports
- Tobacco Control
Final Words on Choosing a Journal

- Use any angle to get accepted
- Sponsored supplement
- Paper fits what the journal generally publishes and is different from recently published articles
- Some journals (e.g., *Lancet* and *AJPH*) have special series or sections—unlikely to be published during those times
- Some journals less likely to publish domestic work
- If it’s written well, and has a finding that is new or contributes significantly, it WILL get published
Authorship

- Important for careers in science
- Can be a source of problems and resentment

**POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:**
- Omission of those who merit authorship (or should have been offered the opportunity)
- Inclusion of those who do not merit authorship
- Order of authorship

Therefore, to Avoid Problems . . .

- Clarify authorship as early as possible
- Author order is sometimes difficult decision, so do it now
  - Assign first author—should be the person writing the paper; this may be the easiest decision
  - PI or mentor should help shield you from problems (unless he/she is the problem)
- For large evaluations, set up a small committee to review paper concepts, author various paper sections
Alternatives to Authorship

- **Group authorship**
  - Provides a means to add many authors
  - “The Communities Putting Prevention to Work Evaluation Group”

- **Acknowledgments**
  - For those who do not meet authorship criteria, but who made smaller contributions

Standardized Criteria for Authorship

- **International Committee of Medical Journal Editors**
  - Established in 1978 in Vancouver
  - Established common criteria for publication of scientific articles in health
  - Established clear criteria for authorship in 1988
Authorship Criteria

- Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content

- One or more authors should take responsibility for the integrity of the work as a whole, from inception to published article—usually first author; and last, senior author

- Each author must meet all three criteria:
  - Make substantial contribution to conception, design, or acquisition of data or to analysis and interpretation of data
  - Draft the article or revise it critically for important intellectual content
  - Give final approval of the version to be published

Authorship Criteria Citation (from previous slide)

Last tasks before you submit your paper to the journal

How to Submit Your Paper

Checklist for Sections of an Evaluation Paper

- **Title page**
  - Long title
  - Short (running) title
  - Authors
  - Affiliations
  - Correspondence
- **Abstract**
- **Key Words**
- **Introduction**
- **Methods**
- **Results**
- **Discussion**
- **Acknowledgments and disclaimers**
- **References**
- **Tables**
- **Figures**
Title Page—All the Details Needed

- Title
- Authors
- Authors’ affiliations
- Corresponding author’s address
- Running title—shortened, first few words
- Word count for text and abstract
- Disclosures, conflicts of interest, funding, previous presentations of the material (sometimes after acknowledgments OR after the paper text)
- Key words—sometimes after abstract

Example Title Page

Use of Tobacco Retail Permitting and Zoning Restrictions to Reduce Youth Access and Exposure to Tobacco in Santa Clara County, California

Nicole Coxen
Janie Burkhartf
Whitney Webberf
Bonnie Broderickf
Ken Yeagerf
Laura Jirnxf
Marty Fenstersheibf

Author affiliations: *Santa Clara County Public Health Department, 7County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors

*Corresponding author address: 1400 Parkmoor Avenue, San Jose CA 95126, USA (408) 793-2741. nicole.coxe@phd.sccgov.org

Running title: Tobacco retail restrictions in a California county

Word count: 2,389
Abstract word count: 183
Keywords: Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Smoking, Minors, Adolescents
Choosing a Title

Types of Titles

- Explanatory—explains what you did
- Interrogatory—asks a question
- Declarative—states what you found
- Funny
The Explanatory Title

- Tells readers how the study was done

- Advantages
  - Most common, recognized, standard
  - Sometimes required by journal

- Disadvantages
  - Can be boring or long

- Examples
  - Descriptive: Meta-analysis of smoking prevention interventions for teenagers
  - Analytic: Relationship of alcohol use and driving accidents in Texas

The Interrogatory Title

- Asks the most important question of the study

- Advantages
  - Catches interest and is focused

- Disadvantages
  - You have to answer the question in the paper!
  - Says little about the design
  - May not be allowed by journal

- Example
  - What is the prevalence of water-pipe tobacco smoking among teens?
The Declarative Title

- States the main finding as a simple sentence
- Advantages
  - No one misunderstands
  - Interesting, provocative, focused
  - Good for conference abstracts
- Disadvantages
  - Invites disagreement
- Example
  - Quitline contacts increased among low-income adults after a comprehensive media campaign

The Funny Title

- Uses a pun, humor, or trendy term
- Advantages
  - Catches attention, interesting, provocative
  - Good for conference abstracts
  - Timely buzz work, hot topic
- Disadvantages
  - Could seem glib, flippant
  - Could get old fast
- Example
  - Paralysis, dialysis, and a penchant for pottery: A case study of lead poisoning
More Tips for Titles

▪ Are the title and main evaluation finding closely related?

▪ Is the title objective in tone?
  ▪ If declarative, does your analysis support it?

▪ Are special features of the study mentioned?
  ▪ For example, randomized, population based, unique population, new method

▪ Can your target readers find your article in PubMed?
  ▪ If no MeSH key words available, use these words in title

Key Words

▪ Remember your audience

▪ Select the three to five key words that will land your paper in the hands—or on the screens—of the right audience

▪ Use standard MeSH headings from PubMed

▪ Check the key words of the paper or papers that come closest to your template
  ▪ If you don’t see them on your template paper, look up the paper up on PubMed
Disclaimers

- **Disclosures**
  - Financial conflict: For instance, if you have received funding or honoraria from the sponsor or any commercial interest involved in the evaluation

- **Previous presentations**
  - Previous presentation at a large conference or abstract submission and publication
    - *Findings presented in this manuscript have been previously presented in part at the annual conference of the American Public Health Association, San Francisco, 2012*

- **Determine whether your employer or funding source(s) require a disclaimer**
Acknowledgments

- One paragraph

- Can acknowledge the following:
  - People who helped guide and/or edit the work or manuscript, but don’t meet criteria for authorship
  - Study staff, data entrants, analysts (if significant effort involved)
  - People who provided significant editorial assistance
  - Participants

Acknowledgments: Example

“The authors would like to thank Dr. Frank Kaharuza for his reading and correction of the manuscript, Bette Agabe for data entry, the many study staff who collected data, and the participants who gave liberally of their time to make this study possible.”
Conclusion

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Every Paper Has a Home

Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It . . .

- Identify three potential journals
  - “High bar”, likely acceptance, very likely acceptance
  - Review instructions to authors online
- Decide on authorship
- Create three titles and have your co-authors review them
- Go to PubMed’s MeSH headings and find your key words
- Write your acknowledgements and disclaimers
Questions?

Contact me at kathleen.whitten@icfi.com