



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

HOW TO GET YOUR ARTICLE PUBLISHED

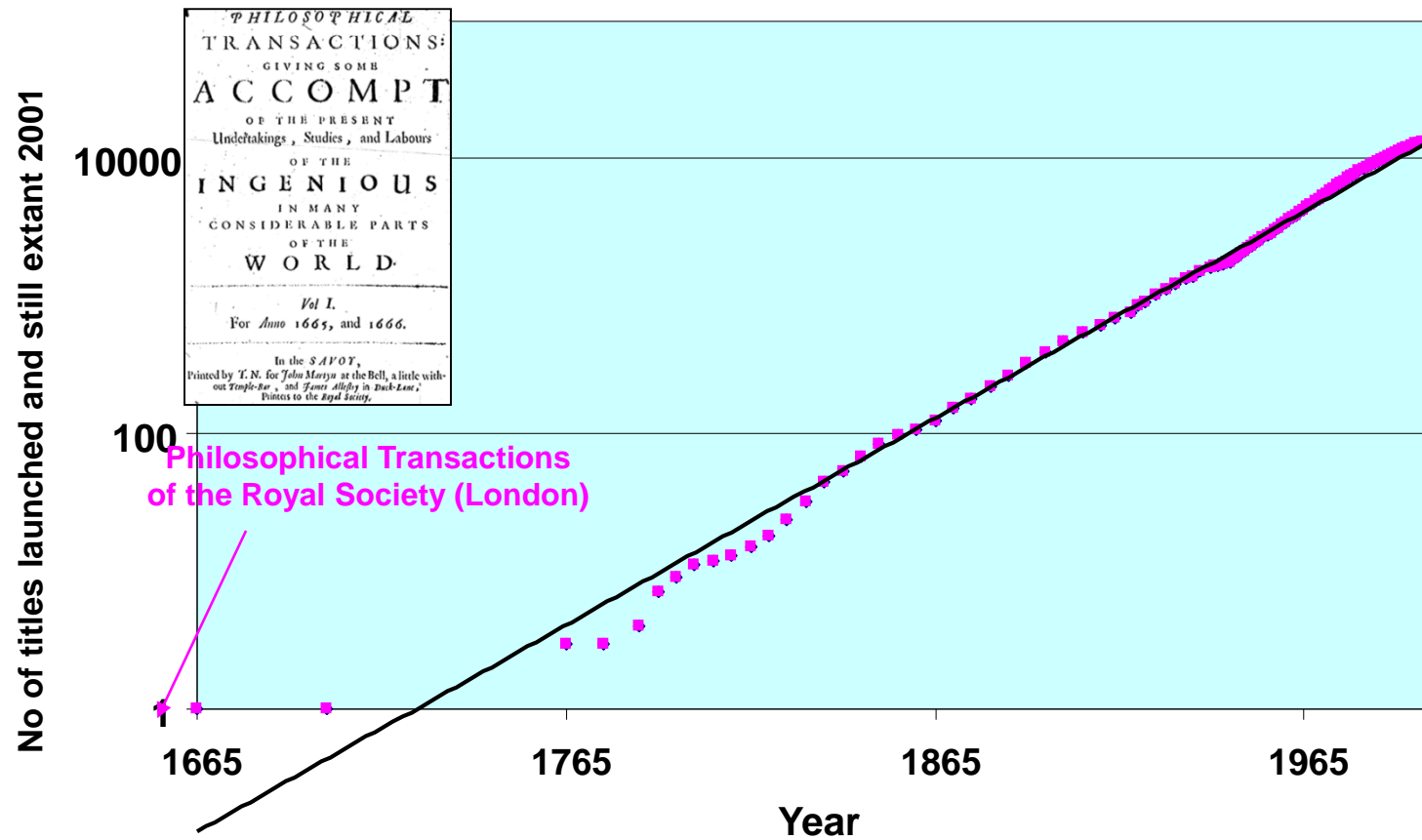
***“AN AUTHOR GUIDE TO
REJECTION ACCEPTANCE!”***

What will we cover?

- Practical tips before you write
- What makes a good manuscript?
- The article structure
- The review and editorial process
- Author ethics



Peer-Reviewed Journal Growth 1665-2001



Source:
M A Mabe The number and growth of journals
Serials 16(2).191-7, 2003



Why publish?

Publishing is one of the necessary steps embedded in the scientific research process. It is also necessary for graduation and career progression.

What to publish:

- New and original results or methods
- Reviews or summaries of particular subject
- Manuscripts that advance the knowledge and understanding in a certain scientific field

What NOT to publish:

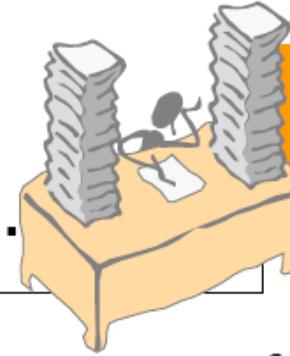
- *Reports of no scientific interest*
- *Out of date work*
- ***Duplications** of previously published work*
- *Incorrect/unacceptable conclusions*

You need a GOOD manuscript to present your contributions to the scientific community



The Process

More submissions of lower quality
→ STRESS for editors and reviewers..



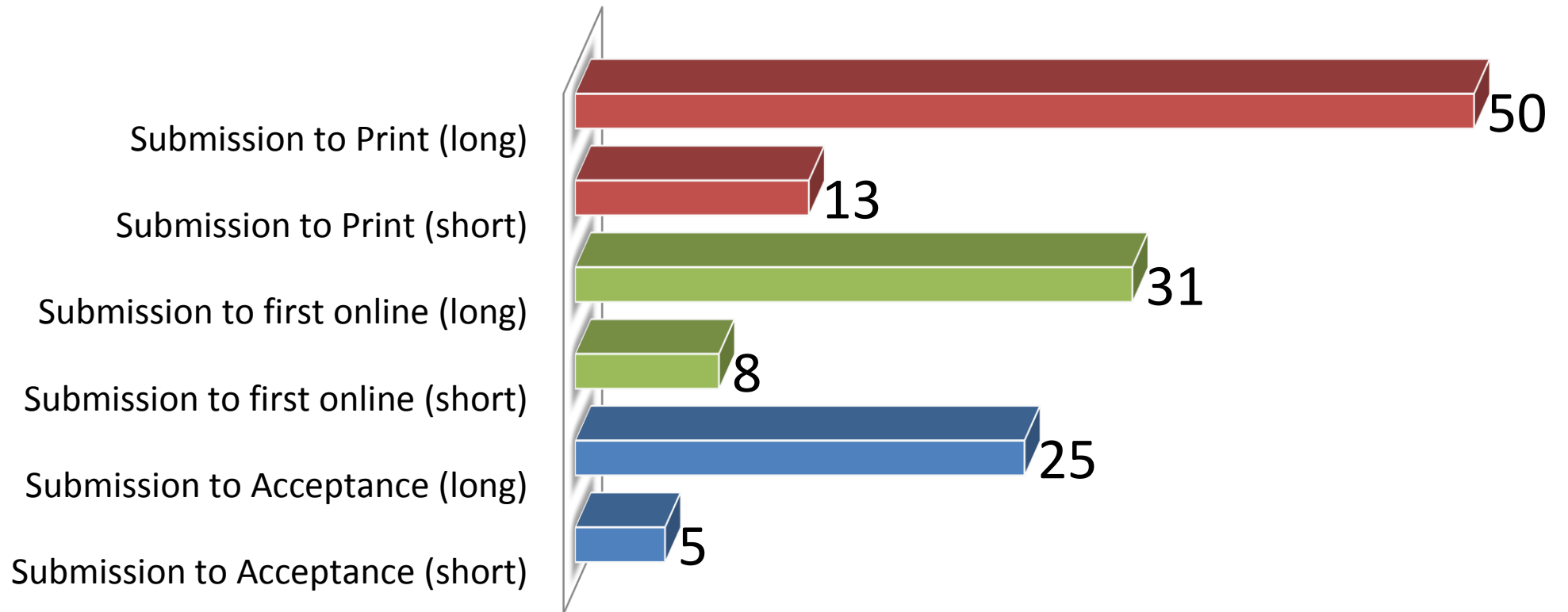
Editors and reviewers are the **most precious resource** of a journal!

- Editors and reviewers are practicing scientists, even leaders in their fields. They are **not professional** journal staff – they do journal work **on top of** their own research, writing and teaching.
- They are busy people who work for journals **to contribute to science.**
- Editors may receive a small payment, but reviewers are **UNPAID.**
- Every manuscript takes up their precious time!
Nowadays they are working **even harder!**

Publishing speed

Time to publish is important.

Long and short publishing times (weeks)



Many journals have now introduced a “Fast Rejection” process by the journal Editor



**Don't
Panic!**

Questions to answer before you write

Think about WHY you want to publish your work.

- *Is it new and interesting?*
- *Is it a current hot topic?*
- *Have you **provided solutions** to some difficult problems?*
- *Are you **ready** to publish at this point?*

If all answers are “yes”, then start preparations for your manuscript



What type of manuscript?

- **Full articles / Original articles:** the most important papers. Often substantial and significant **completed pieces of research.**
- **Letters / Rapid Communications/ Short communications:** **quick and early communication of significant and original advances.** Much shorter than full articles (check limitations).
- **Review papers / perspectives:** summarize recent developments on a specific topic. Highlight important previously reported points. Not the place to introduce new information. **Often invited.**

Self-evaluate your work. Is it sufficient for a full article? Or are your results so thrilling that they should be shown as soon as possible?

Ask your supervisor and your colleagues for advice on manuscript type. Sometimes outsiders can see things more clearly than you.



Identify the right audience for your paper

- Identify the audience



- Verify their interest in the topic

- *“Knock-down of mdr-1 activity in transiently transfected HEK cells” in Pharmazeutische Industrie?*

- Determine the range of interest - local vs international?

- *“A bioequivalence study of ibuprofen tablets marketed in Southern Kosovo”*

Select the best journal for submission

- Look at **your references** – these will help you narrow your choices.
- **Review** recent publications in **each candidate journal**. Find out the hot topics, the accepted types of articles, etc.
- Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Is the journal **peer-reviewed**?
 - Who is this journal's **audience**?
 - What is the **average time to print**?
 - What is the journal's **Impact Factor**?
- **Decide on one journal. DO NOT submit to multiple journals.**

An international editor says...

*“The following problems appear **much too frequently**”*

- Submission of papers which are clearly out of scope*
- Failure to format the paper according to the Guide for Authors*
- Inappropriate (or no) suggested reviewers*
- Inadequate response to reviewers*
- Inadequate standard of English*
- Resubmission of rejected manuscripts without revision*

What makes a good manuscript?

- Contains a clear, useful, and exciting scientific message.
- Flows in a logical manner that the reader can follow.
- Is formatted to best showcase the material.
- Is written in a style that transmits the message clearly.



A Word about Your Words

This is NOT creative writing class.

Journal space is precious.

Be concise.

If clarity can be achieved in n words, never use $n+1$.

More difficult than you imagine!

What makes a good manuscript?

It is all about the reader. (Remember editors and reviewers are in this group!)

- Writing a good manuscript is NOT easy. Be prepared to work hard on it.
 - *Cherish your work* – if you do not take care, why should the journal?
 - *There is no secret recipe for success* – just some simple rules, dedication, and hard work.
 - *Editors and reviewers are all busy scientists, just like you* – make things easy to **save their time!**

Presentation is critical!

The general structure of a full article

- Title
- Authors
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Main text (IMRAD)
 - *Introduction*
 - *Methods*
 - *Results*
 - *And*
 - *Discussion (Conclusions)*
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Supplementary material



Write Backwards!

- Write in the following order:
 - *Figures and tables*
 - *Methods, Results and Discussion*
 - *Conclusions and Introduction*
 - *Abstract and title*
- Each section has a definite purpose.



Developing Your Title

- *This is your opportunity to attract the reader's attention.*
 - Remember: readers are the potential authors who will cite your article
- *Keep it informative and concise.*
 - Reviewers will check whether the title is specific and whether it reflects the content of the manuscript.
 - Editors hate titles that make no sense or fail to represent the subject matter adequately.
- *Avoid technical jargon and abbreviations.*
 - You wish to have a readership as large as possible, right?
- *Discuss with your co-authors.*

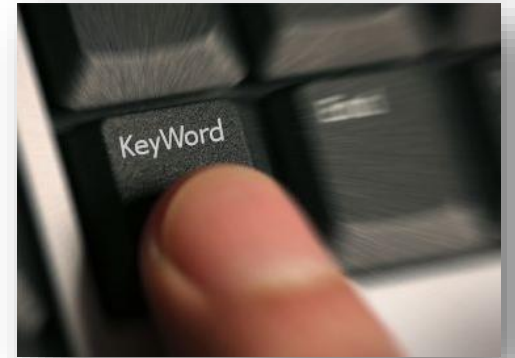
The Abstract

- *Should stand alone!*
- *Consider it the advertisement of your article. Should tell the prospective reader what you did and highlight the key findings.*
 - Avoid using jargon and uncommon abbreviations.
- *You must be accurate and specific!*
 - Use words which reflect the precise meaning
- *A clear abstract will strongly influence whether or not your work is further considered.*
- *Follow word limitations (50-300 words)!!!*



Keywords

- These are the labels of your manuscript and critical to correct indexing and searching.
 - *Shouldn't be too broad or too narrow (think Google ...)*
- Use only those abbreviations that are firmly established in the field.
 - *e.g. DNA*
- Check the Guide for Authors!
 - *Number, label, definition, thesaurus, range, and other special requests*



The Introduction

- *Your chance to convince readers of the importance of your work.*
- *Describe the problem. Are there any existing solutions? What are their main limitations? And what do you hope to achieve?*
- *Provide a perspective consistent with the nature of the journal.*
- *Introduce the main scientific publications on which your work is based.*
 - Cite a couple of original and important works, including recent review articles
- *Editors hate references irrelevant to the work, or inappropriate judgments on your own achievements.*
 - They will think that you have no sense of purpose at all!



Pitfalls of The Introduction

- *Too wordy*
 - Never use more words than necessary.
 - Do not turn this section into a history lesson. Readers lose interest.
- *A mixed bag of introduction with results, discussion, and conclusion thrown in for good measure.*
 - Always keep sections separate to ensure the manuscript flows logically from one section to the next.
- *Has the “used-car salesman feel” of oversell*
- *Excessive use of expressions such as “novel”, “first time”, “first ever”, “paradigm-changing” (use these sparingly!)*

The Methods Section

- Details, details, details - a knowledgeable reader should be able to reproduce the experiment.
- However, use references and Supplementary Materials for previously published procedures.
 - *Do not repeat the details of established methods.*
 - *A general summary with reference is sufficient.*
- Reviewers will criticize incomplete or incorrect descriptions.
 - *and may even recommend rejection*



Results

3. Results

3.1. Factors affecting entrapment efficiency of flurbiprofen in niosomal formulations

3.1.1. Effect of surfactant structure

To investigate the influence of surfactant structure on flurbiprofen entrapment efficiency, niosomal formulations of different spans were prepared from proniosomes with the same total lipid concentration (100 $\mu\text{mol/ml}$). Results listed in Table 3 show that Sp 60 has significant higher entrapment efficiency than other span types ($P < 0.05$). This could be due to the surfactant chemical structure. All span types have the same head group and different alkyl chain. Increasing the alkyl chain length is leading to higher entrapment efficiency (Hao et al., 2002). The entrapment efficiency followed the

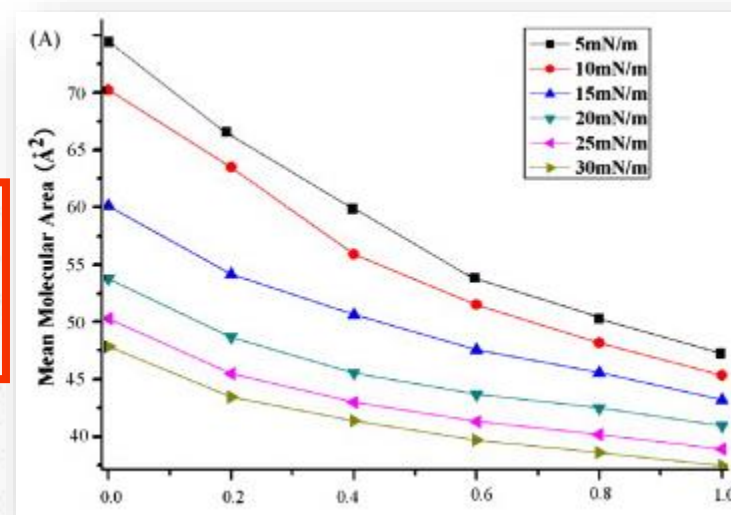


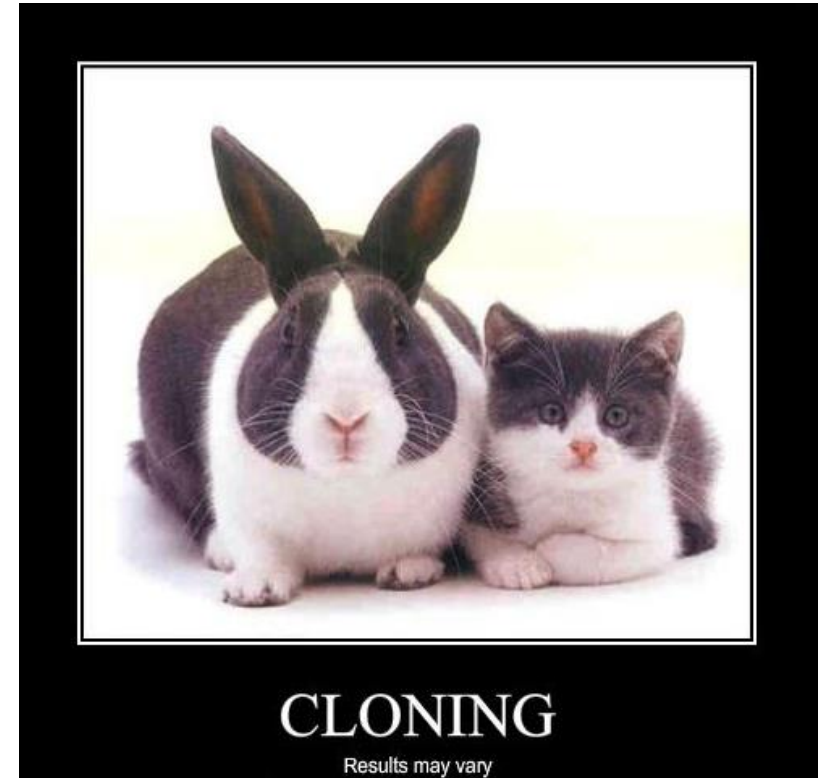
Table 1.

Performance of our approach compared with Kruthof's approach

PDB code	Ho. of atoms	Kruthof's approach			MetaMol		
		Ho. of triangles	Computing time (s)	FPS (1024 × 1024)	Ho. of triangles	Computing time (s)	FPS (1024 × 1024)
7tmn	33	23,424	1.1	800	7,116	0.02	200
1grm (Gramicidin A)	272	310,488	16.1	130	73,416	1.7	50
1g6x	509	481,856	28.7	95	146,476	3.6	25
1cbs	1091	1,664,184	93.1	30	325,076	8.2	12
1j4n	1852	2,165,268	137.4	25	558,372	15.4	7

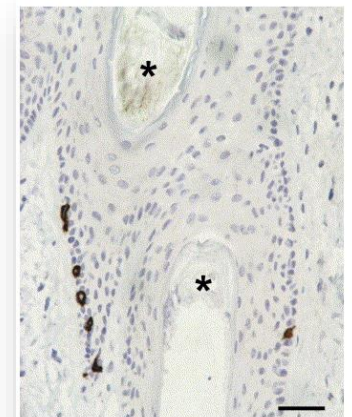
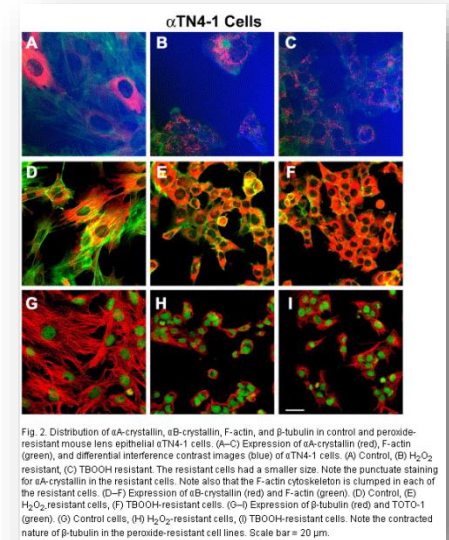
Results

- Only representative results, essential for the Discussion, should be presented.
 - *Show data of secondary importance in Supplementary Materials.*
- Do not “hide” data in the hope of saving it for a later paper.
 - *You may lose evidence to support your conclusion.*
- Use sub-headings to keep results of the same type together
 - *Easier to review and read.*
- Tell a clear and easy-to-understand story.



Appearance counts!

- *Un-crowded plots: 3 or 4 data sets per figure; well-selected scales; appropriate axis label size; symbols clear to read and data sets easy to discriminate.*
- *Each photograph must have a scale marker of professional quality on one corner.*
- *Use color ONLY when necessary. If different line styles can clarify the meaning, never use colors or other thrilling effects.*
- *Color needs to be visible and distinguishable when printed out in black & white.*
- *Do NOT 'selectively adjust' any image to enhance visualization of results.*
- *Do not include long boring tables!*



Discussion – What the results mean

- It is the most important section of your article. Here you get the chance to SELL your data!
 - *Many manuscripts are rejected because the Discussion is weak*
- Make the Discussion corresponding to the Results.
 - *But do not reiterate the results*
- You need to compare the published results with yours.
 - *Do NOT ignore work in disagreement with yours – confront it and convince the reader that you are correct or better*



More Pitfalls to be Aware of:

- Statements that go beyond what the results can support
- Unspecific expressions such as “higher temperature”, “at a lower rate”.
 - *Quantitative descriptions are always preferred.*
- Sudden introduction of new terms or ideas
- Speculations on possible interpretations are allowed. But these should be rooted in fact, rather than imagination.
- Check the organization, number and quality of illustrations, the logic and the justifications.

Revision of Results and Discussion is not just paper work. You may need to do further experiments, derivations, or simulations.

Sometimes you cannot clarify your idea in words because some critical items have not been studied substantially.



Scientific Language - Tenses

- Present tense for known facts and hypotheses:
“The average life of a honey bee is 6 weeks”
- Past tense for experiments you have conducted:
“All the honey bees were maintained in an environment with a consistent temperature of 23 degrees centigrade...”
- Past tense when you describe the results of an experiment:
“The average life span of bees in our contained environment was 8 weeks...”

Conclusions

In summary, we have demonstrated that the mercapto-acetamide-based HDACIs possess favorable solubility, lipophilicity, permeability and plasma stability features as compared to recently FDA approved drug Vorinostat (SAHA). Based on these findings, we assume that these compounds could sufficiently be absorbed by the intestinal tract. However, further studies are needed in order to determine the pharmacokinetic disposition of these compounds.

compounds

order to determine the pharmacokinetic disposition of these

Conclusions

- Tells how your work advances the field from the present state of knowledge!
- Without clear Conclusions, reviewers and readers will find it difficult to judge the work, and whether or not it merits publication in the journal.
- Do NOT repeat the Abstract, or just list experimental results.
 - *Trivial statements of your results are unacceptable in this section.*
- Provide a clear scientific justification for your work, and indicate possible applications and extensions.
 - *You should also suggest future experiments and/or point out those that are underway.*



Acknowledgements

Recognize those who helped in the research (you want them to help again, don't you?)

Include individuals who have assisted you in your study:

Advisors

Financial supporters

Proofreaders

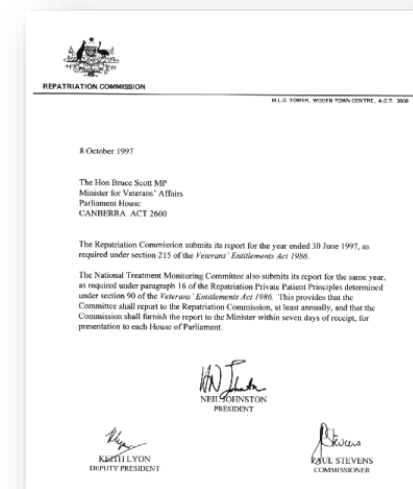
Typists

Suppliers who may have given materials

- More mistakes are found in the references than any other part of the manuscript.
- It is one of the most annoying problems, and causes great headaches among editors...
 - Cite the main scientific publications on which your work is based
 - Do not inflate the manuscript with too many references – it doesn't make it a better manuscript!
 - Avoid excessive self-citations
 - Avoid excessive citations of publications from the same region

Cover letter – your chance to speak to the Editor directly

- *View it as a job application letter; you want to “sell” your work...*
- *WHY did you submit the manuscript to THIS journal?*
 - Do not summarize your manuscript, or repeat the abstract
 - Mention what would make your manuscript special to the journal
- *Mention special requirements, e.g. if you do not wish your manuscript to be reviewed by certain reviewers, and any conflicts of interest.*
- *Albeit that most editors will not reject a manuscript only because the cover letter is bad, but a good cover letter may accelerate the editorial process of your paper.*

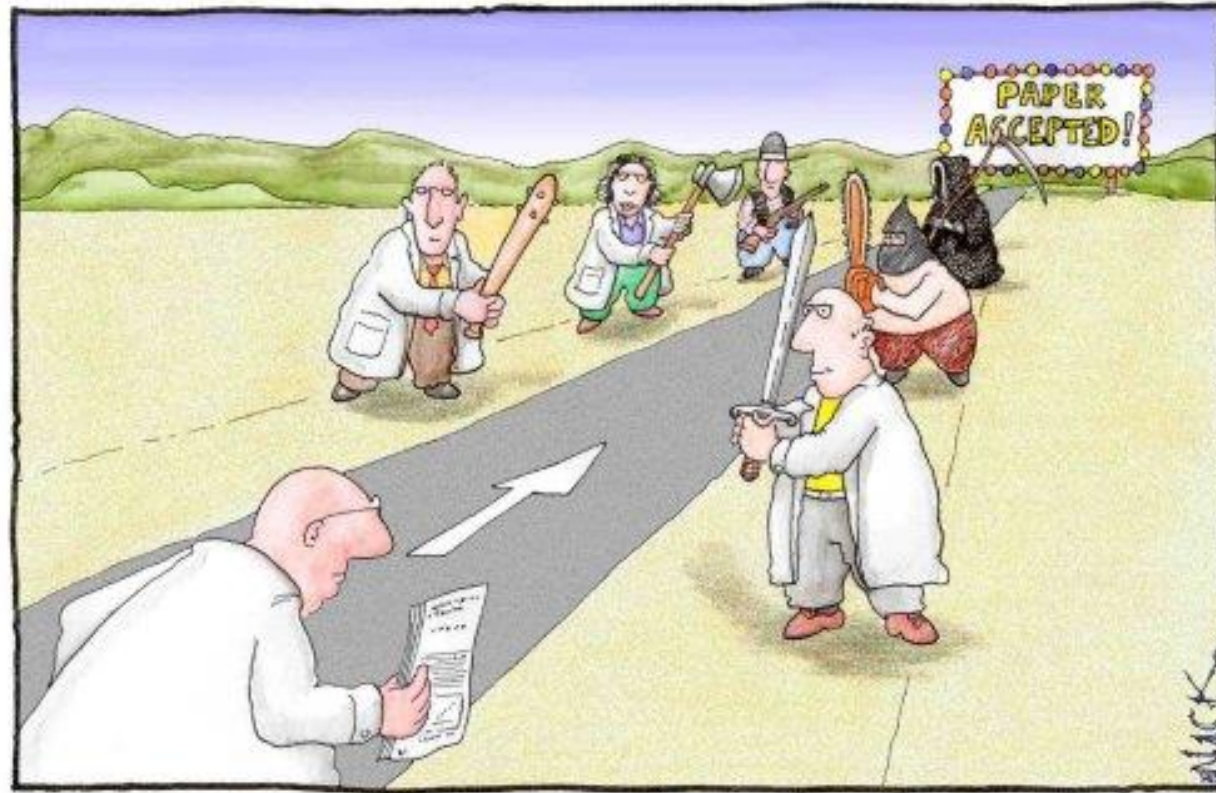


Suggest potential reviewers

- Your suggestions will help the Editor to move your manuscript to the review stage more efficiently.
- You can easily find potential reviewers and their contact details from articles in your specific subject area (e.g., your references).
- The reviewers should represent at least two regions of the world. And they should not be your supervisor or close friends.
- Be prepared to suggest 3-6 potential reviewers.

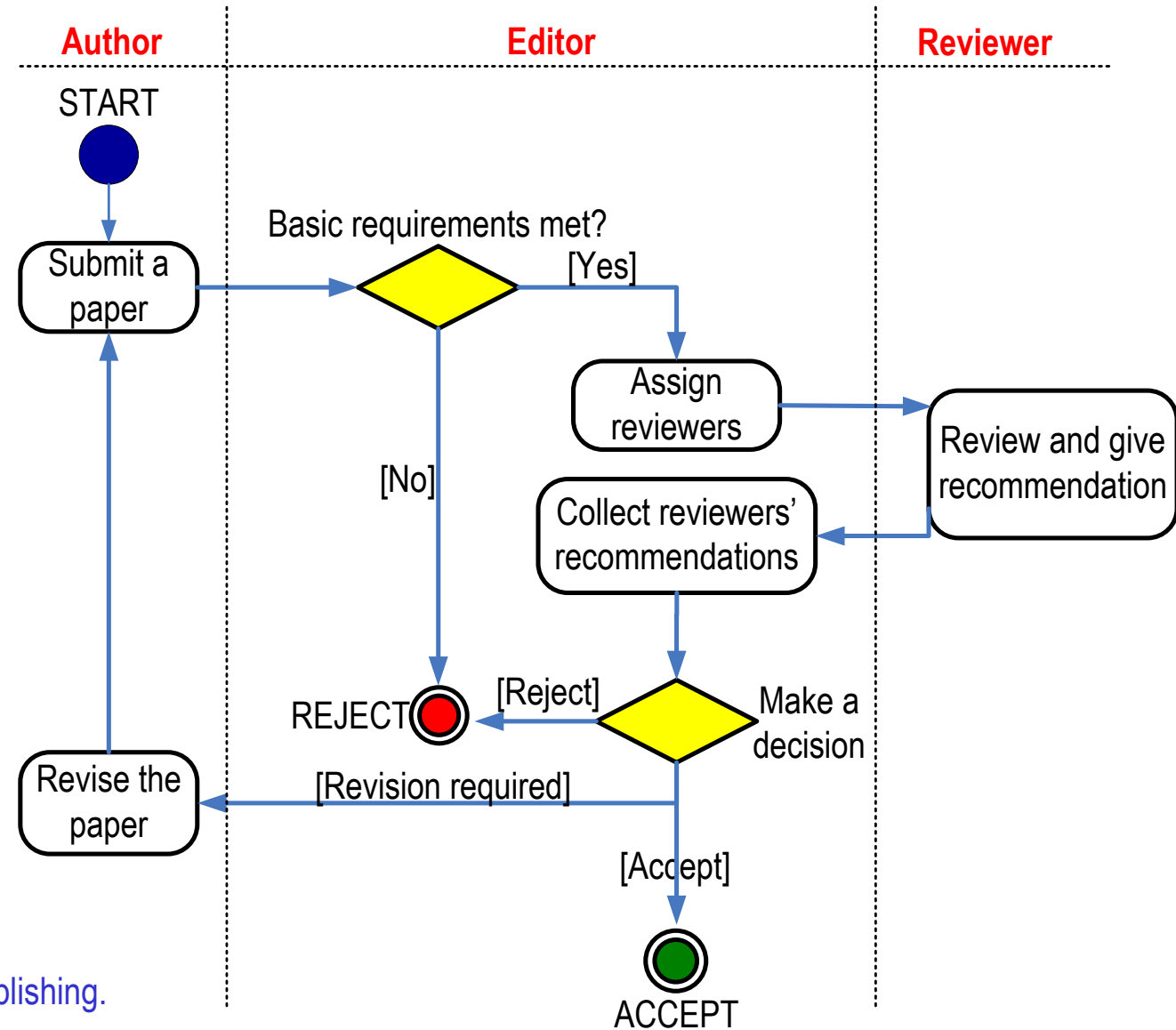


The review and editorial process



Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as 'quite an improvement.'

Submission is not a “black hole”



Initial Editorial Review

Many journals use a system of initial editorial review. Editors may reject a manuscript without sending it for review

Why?

- The peer-review system is **grossly overloaded** and editors wish to use reviewers only for those papers with a good probability of acceptance.
- It is a **disservice** to ask reviewers to spend time on work that has clear and evident deficiencies.



Revision before submission – *checklist*

Reasons for early rejection: content (aims and scope)

- Paper is of limited interest or covers local issues only (sample type, geography, specific product, etc.).
- Paper is a routine application of well-known methods
- Paper presents an incremental advance or is limited in scope
- Novelty and significance are not immediately evident or sufficiently well-justified

What should you check?

- Is your work of interest to an international audience?
- Does the work add significant value to an existing method?
- Is the perspective consistent with the journal?
- Are the right conclusions drawn from the results?
- Does your work add to the existing body of knowledge? – Just because it has not been done before is no justification for doing it now. And just because you have done the study does not mean that is very important!

Revision before submission – *checklist*

Reasons for early rejection: Preparation

- Failure to meet submission requirements
- Incomplete coverage of literature
- Unacceptably poor English

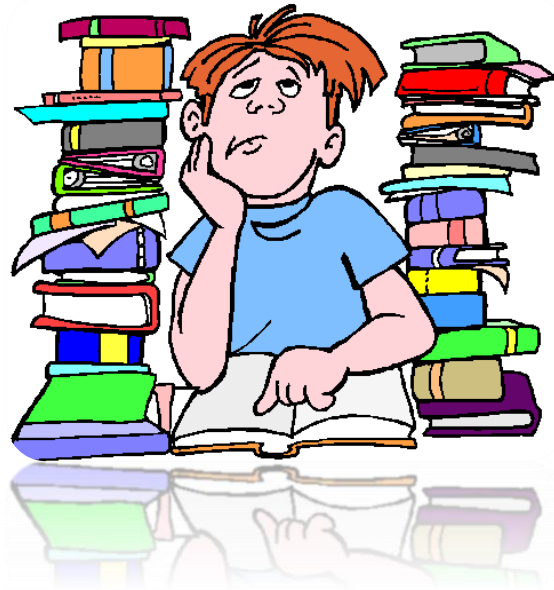
What should you check?

- Read the Guide for Authors again! Check your manuscript point by point. Make sure every aspect of the manuscript is in accordance with the guidelines. (Word count, layout of the text and illustrations, format of the references and in-text citations, etc.)
- Are there too many self-citations, or references that are difficult for the international reader to access?
- Did the first readers of your manuscript easily grasp the essence? Correct all the grammatical and spelling mistakes.

- Consider reviewing as a procedure in which several peers discuss your work. Learn from their comments, and join the discussion.
- Nearly every manuscript requires revision.
- Bear in mind that editors and reviewers **mean to help** you improve your article
 - *Do not take offense.*
- Minor revision **does NOT guarantee** acceptance after revision.
 - *Do not count on acceptance, but address all comments carefully*
- Revise the **whole** manuscript
 - *not just the parts the reviewers point out*

Revision after submission

Carefully study the comments and prepare a detailed letter of response.



- A second review of the revised manuscript is common. Cherish the chance of discussing your work directly with other scientists in your community. Please prepare a detailed letter of response.
- Cut and paste **each** comment by the reviewer. Answer it directly below. Do not miss any point.
- State **specifically** what changes (if any) you have made to the manuscript. Give page and line number.
 - *A typical problem – Discussion is provided but it is not clear what changes have been made.*
- Provide a **scientific response** to the comment you accept; or a **convincing, solid and polite rebuttal** to the point you think the reviewer is wrong.
- Write in a way that your responses can be given to the reviewer.

- Never treat publication as a lottery by resubmitting a rejected manuscript directly to another journal without any significant revision!!! It will not save any of your time and energy...
- The original reviewers (even editors) may eventually find it, which can lead to animosity towards the author.
- A possible strategy
 - In your **cover letter**, declare that the paper was rejected and name the journal.
 - **Include** the referees' reports and **a detailed letter of response**, showing how each comment has been addressed.
 - **Explain why** you are resubmitting the paper to this journal, e.g., this journal is a more appropriate journal; the manuscript has been improved as a result of its previous review; etc.



Important to remember

- Preparation is important but do not spend too much time on your preparations
- Submit to the right journal (scope and prestige)
- Submit to one journal only
- Check the English
- Pay attention to structure
- Pay attention to journal requirements
- Be honest



Baie dankie 😊 Hartelijk bedankt

Questions?!