The Pleasures and Perils of Medical Publishing

Richard Alweis
Rochester Regional Health, richard.alweis@rochesterregional.org

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The Pleasures and Perils of Medical Publishing

Richard Alweis, MD
DIO and Associate CMO for Education
Rochester Regional Health
October 23, 2021
Purpose

• Provide an evidence/guideline-based (where existing) discussion on medical publishing, and make it up provide a lessons learned approach where it doesn’t
Who am I? A Series of Disclosures

• A story to begin our tale...

• Somehow, also now in the medical journal publishing game, so:
  • Associate Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of Community Hospital Internal Medicine Perspectives*
  • Associate Editor-in-Chief for the *Advances in Clinical Medical Research and Healthcare Delivery.*
  • I receive no compensation for either position, and do not represent the journals today

• Every anecdote in this presentation is 100% true
Framing Case: Something’s Rotten in the State of Pennsylvania

• Resident at Hospital A writing case report

• Pathology was a send out to Hospital B

• Hospital B pathologist asked to send photo of slide to include in case report

• Pathologist refuses to release slide without being listed as an author on the case report

• What action(s) would you recommend to Hospital A resident?
Agenda

• At the end of today’s discussion, participants will be able to:
  • Describe qualities of a manuscript that are attractive to editors
  • Recognize potential red flags to editors
  • Identify the standards used to determine authorship
  • Identify a process to determine a journal for submission
  • Describe the characteristics of Open Access publishing
  • Recognize the signs that a journal is predatory open access
• Time Permitting:
  • Describe the process for a journal to become “real”
What do editors want to see in a manuscript?
Framing Case: The Heroine in the Story Slays the Dragon

• Abstract
  • “Chasing the dragon syndrome”, is a rare neurological condition which is caused by heroine abuse. Also known as Heroine induced leukoencephalopathy, the condition occurs after inhalation of heroine. This mode of heroine consumption traces its origin in Southeast Asia\(^1\). The condition can present with a number of initial neurological symptoms, such as headache, confusion, visual impairment, somnolence and seizures. MRI remains an important diagnostic aid. We present a case of a 64-year-old lady who was brought in the ER of Detroit Medical Centre with complaint of seizures. The history, subsequent clinical course, and MRI findings were consistent with Heroine induced Leukoencephalopathy. We report this case for its rarity.

• If you are the editor, and this is the abstract of a manuscript that you received, what are your thoughts?
What is an Editor or Peer Reviewer Seeking?

• Abstract:
  • Easily understood without reading manuscript
  • No references, acronyms, or abbreviations

• Introduction:
  • Explains goals in 3 paragraphs (or less)

• Methods:
  • Provides sufficient detail that study can be replicated
  • Appropriate statistical analysis

• Results:
  • Appropriate scientific redundancy (e.g., controls) and rigor applied throughout
  • More tables/figures, less words

What is an Editor or Peer Reviewer Seeking?

• Discussion:
  • Findings in perspective, rather than simply rehashing results
  • Compare findings with prior ones in the literature
  • Honest assessment of the limitations of the study
• Figures and Tables:
  • Clear, concise, obvious labels and clear added value
• References:
  • Appropriate?
  • In journal format?
• Quality of Writing:
  • Is it any good?

What are potential red flags to editors?
Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Signs That Might Indicate Authorship Problems (1)

- Unspecified role in acknowledgements
- Unfeasibly long or short author list
- Questionable role of contributors
- Similarity check shows work derived from other work where the original author is not on the author list or acknowledged
- Language quality in the manuscript does not match that of the cover letter
- Corresponding author seems unable to respond to reviewers’ comments

I’d like to thank Tom Nasca, the CEO of the ACGME. Just playing it safe in case he’s listening.

17 authors for a simple case report? Perfectly reasonable.

https://publicationethics.org/files/u7140/Authorship%20problems.pdf; accessed 9-3-21
Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Signs That Might Indicate Authorship Problems (2)

• From the category of, “I see their name all over the word document but not on the title page…”
  • Manuscript by someone not on the author list or acknowledged
  • Tracking in manuscript shows that authors added or removed
  • Authorship changes without notification during revisions

• Several similar article have been published under different author names or aliases

• Impossibly prolific author

https://publicationethics.org/files/u7140/Authorship%20problems.pdf; accessed 9-3-21
What standards are used to determine authorship?
Authorship Rules (1)

• Who is an author? Per the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE):
  4 criteria—all connected by AND not OR:

1. “Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content
3. Final approval of the version to be published
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.”

Adapted from: ICMJE | Recommendations | Defining the Role of Authors and Contributors
Authorship Rules (2)

• Other requirements:
  
  • Author should be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work
  
  • All members of a group named as authors must meet all four criteria for authorship

Adapted from: ICMJE | Recommendations | Defining the Role of Authors and Contributors
Framing Case: The True Tale of A, B, and C

• A chance encounter at the annual ACGME meeting....
• A partnership that goes bad
• An ugly authorial order dispute...

• What do you recommend?
Authorship Disputes (1)

• COPE Best Practices:
  • Every team should have a written authorship agreement before the article is written. Make sure everyone understands to and agrees.
  • Disagreements about authorship classified into two types:
    • Disputes – do not contravene ICMJE guidelines
    • Misconduct – contravene ICMJE guidelines

Adapted from: How to handle authorship disputes: https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/how-handle-authorship-disputesa-guide-new-researchers
Authorship Disputes (2)

• Keep these in mind:

• Editors:

• COPE:

Jurisdiction
Framing Case: The True Tale of A, B, and C Continued

• Author meeting

• Plagiarism alleged

• Blackmail attempted

• What would you recommend?
Framing Case: The True Tale of A, B, and C Aftermath

• Arbitration
• Plagiarism allegations
• Cease and desist
How do I choose a journal for submission?
Framing Case: Where Should We Stick This?

• Seasonal variation in rectal foreign body admissions?!

• What advice would you give the authors?
Look At Your Reference List

Are you citing particular subset of journals frequently?
Are your citations citing particular journals frequently?

Yes
Start with the highest impact factor journal in that frequent-citation list (Clarivate)—Accepted?

Yes
Congratulations! Time to ask for a raise!

No
Take feedback received and improve manuscript, then select next tier of journals
Look At Your Reference List

Are you citing a particular subset of journals frequently?
Are your citations citing particular journals frequently?

If yes:
- Reach out to editors at several journals from your list and ask them if they’d be interested in your manuscript topic.
  - Yes: Submit to journal with interested editor – Accepted?
  - No: Submit to lower-tier but PubMed Indexed general medical journal – Accepted?

If no:
- Congratulations! Time to ask for a raise!
Framing Case Revisited: Where Should We Stick This?

Remember:

Everything you do is publishable if you can just find the right angle

Most Open Access journals have low impact factors, but allow you to widely distribute your work

A few words about open access
Open Access Journals

• Open access (OA) = “free” and “unrestricted” online access

• Government funded research mandate

• OA low overhead cost, high profit margin

• Multiple variations on model

Adapted from:
3) White RKA, Angelo A, Fitchett D, Fraser M, Hayes L, Howie J, Richardson E, White B. Only two out of five articles by New Zealand researchers are free-to-access: a multiple API study of access, citations, cost of Article Processing Charges (APC), and the potential to increase the proportion of open access. PeerJ. 2021 May 26;9:e11417.
**Open Access Journals**

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Green</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Platinum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Article Release</strong></td>
<td>After embargo period and only to subscribers</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>Immediately in print, after embargo on line</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version Released</strong></td>
<td>Usually AM after peer review but before copyediting and typesetting</td>
<td>Final published VOR, after copyediting and typesetting</td>
<td>Final published VOR, after copyediting and typesetting in print, AM online</td>
<td>Final published VOR, after copyediting and typesetting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How are publication costs met?</strong></td>
<td>APC</td>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Free for print, APC for online</td>
<td>No charge to authors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AM = Accepted manuscript  
VOR = Version of record  
APC = Article Processing Charge
How do I know if a journal is predatory open access?
Framing Case: Dear Doctor

Dear Dr. Richard Alweis,

Greetings for the day!

We are delighted to invite Eminent Scientists, Academicians and Researchers to submit their original research articles, etc. for publication Journal of Neurology Research Reviews & Reports. For an effective scientific reading and public view with an aim to reach the world wide researchers and practitioners.

We are advanced in presenting visual PPTs and Video articles in online which can be more accessible to globally

We would appreciate receiving your submission on or before August 25th, 2021.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Best regards,

Reinaud J

Journal of Neurology Research Reviews & Reports
Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing

• Collaboration to clarify principles for “respectable” journals
  • International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (IMJE)
  • Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)
  • Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
  • Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)
  • World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)

1) Website
2) Name of Journal
3) Peer Review Process
4) Ownership and Management
5) Governing Body
6) Editorial team/contact information
7) Copyright and licensing
8) Author fees
9) Process for identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct
10) Publication Ethics
11) Publishing Schedule
12) Access
13) Archiving
14) Revenue sources
15) Advertising
16) Direct marketing

Signs That Something Isn’t on the Up and Up (1)

- Website hijacking
- Name of journal suspiciously similar to another journal (differing by just a letter or small word)
- Editorial Board not clearly listed
- Editorial Board seems sketchy (ignore sketchiness of today’s speaker)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Authentic and Hijacked Websites of Selected Medical Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legitimate journal title (ISSN)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitae (0121-4004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terapeuticheskii Arkhiv (0040-3660)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardiologiya (0022-9040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revue Scientifique et Technique (0253-1933)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N/A¹ This journal does not have an Impact Factor; N/A² This journal does not have a website.

Signs That Something Isn’t on the Up and Up (2)

• “Cold call” emails with poor language skills:

Dear Dr. Richard Alweis,

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Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Best regards,

Reinaud J

Journal of Neurology Research Reviews & Reports

I’ve been promoted! Hello, Nobel Committee!
Dear Professor,

Greetings from OAJBS!

OAJBS is very delighted to share with you that, we stepped into another achievement i.e., we are fruitfully completed Volume 4 Issue 3 of our Journal. Now, we would like to commence a new issue with your presence, so can we expect your workpiece?

We modestly request you to send any type of article based on your research interest.

We truly appreciate your attention!

Regardfully,
Jessica Williams

ISSN: 2690-487X | Impact factor: 0.586
Open Access Journal of Biomedical Science (OAJBS)
Signs That Something Isn’t on the Up and Up (4)

• Google Maps indicates their corporate address is a private home or in a mall:

Sincerely,
Nichole Robinson
Editorial Coordinator
Acquaint Publications LLC
16192 Coastal Highway
Sussex, Lewes, 19958

We publish your research and sell hot tubs! So, we are totally legit
Signs That Something Isn’t on the Up and Up (5)

• Bragging about being indexed on Google, Research Gate, etc. as well as non-existent or self-created indexing services

  High Visibility: Dental Research and Oral Health indexed or abstracted in: Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, CrossRef, WorldCat, ResearchGate, Academic Keys, DRJI, Microsoft Academic, Academia.edu, OpenAIRE, Scribd, Baidu Scholar

• Invite you to submit to a journal that has little or nothing to do with what you do:
  • “We appreciate your scientific activities; we feel honored to invite you to submit the papers for the upcoming issue August 2021 Edition. JDOP is an open access peer reviewed journal with an aim to publish latest research findings in the field of dentistry.”

This presentation has an FE (Frank Edwards) Impact Factor of 11.32
Signs That Something Isn’t on the Up and Up (6)

• Promise rapid turnaround and quick peer review.

• Euphemism for no peer review and they publish anything, as long as you pay a fee.

• The following paper was accepted by the *International Journal of Advanced Computer Technology*, with an anonymous peer reviewer rating the article as excellent, and another calling it ground-breaking.
The Excellent, Ground-Breaking Paper

Get me off Your Fucking Mailing List

David Mazieres and Eddie Kohler
New York University
University of California, Los Angeles
http://www.mailavenger.org/

Abstract

Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list.
Even Real Journals Make Mistakes....

This article has been retracted based on the discovery that the submitting author, Dr. Ahmed Elkhoury, invited his wife to serve as a peer reviewer without properly disclosing this relationship. As this fraudulent peer review was completed and taken into consideration when determining whether to publish this article, Cureus has no choice but to retract this article due to this author misconduct and falsification of peer review.

An additional four articles submitted by Dr. Elkhoury have been retracted for the same reason. Cureus greatly regrets that these fraudulent peer reviews were not identified prior to publication. Dr. Elkhoury's residency program has been notified as is consistent with COPE guidelines.

Retraction

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How does a journal become “real?”
The Journey (1)

• Find a reputable publishing house
  • Do they have a stable of PubMed-indexed journals?
  • Do they have clearly posted guidelines?
  • Do they have clearly articulated MVV?
  • Interview each other to ensure fit
• Sign contract
The Journey (2)

• Establish editorial team, including those with backgrounds in appropriate subject areas
  • Clearly indicate who they are and their area of content expertise on website
• Place on website editorial policies, style guide
• Publish first issue (you actually need to do this before next steps)
The Journey (3)

• PHASE 1 - ISSN Intake and Registration
  • An International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is an eight-digit serial number used to uniquely identify a serial publication

• PHASE 2 - CrossRef registration/membership
  • CrossRef is an official Digital Object Identifier (DOI) Registration Agency of the International DOI Foundation.
  • The DOI system provides a technical and social infrastructure for the registration and use of persistent interoperable identifiers, called DOIs, for use on digital networks.
The Journey (4)

• PHASE 3 - Similarity Check ➔ after first 2 phases complete, you can get anti-plagiarism software license (iThenticate commonly used in medical publishing)

• PHASE 4 - DOAJ application and Index Review

• PHASE 5 - PubMed indexing application (40 manuscripts and 2 years of publishing minimum)

• PHASE 6 – Listing in Emerging Sciences Citations Index (after a certain number of citations)

• PHASE 7 – Clarivate (formerly Thomson-Reuters) calculates Impact Factor
Returning to Framing Case: Something’s Rotten in the State of Pennsylvania

• Resident at Hospital A writing case report

• Pathology was a send out to Hospital B

• Hospital B pathologist asked to send photo of slide to include in case report

• Pathologist refuses to release slide without being listed as an author on the case report

• Knowing what you now know, what would you recommend resident and faculty at Hospital A do in this situation?
Summary

• Editors/reviewers have poorly promulgated but established standards for what they generally want to see in a manuscript
• There are well-established rules for determining authorship
• There is an art to choosing where to submit your manuscript, but be prepared for many rejections
• Watch out for predatory open access journals
• Journals that have undergone the official process will have ISSNs, DOIs, and well-established policies around ownership of copyright, article processing charges, etc.
• If I can do it, so can you!
Thank you!

Any questions?

10-11-21 Email: “Disclaimer: This is not a spam message and has been sent to you because of your eminence in the province. If, however, you do not want to receive any email in future from Internal Medicine 2021 reply us with the subject "remove /unsubscribe". We concern for your concealment.”

Me, too, Comrade.
I’m a spy.