# LABORATORY INVESTIGATION MODERN PATHOLOGY

OFFICIAL JOURNALS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADIAN ACADEMY OF PATHOLOGY

#### YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE ON HOW TO WRITE FOR SCHOLARLY PUBLICATION



Welcome to the road to scholarly publishing. We are pleased you have chosen to consult this brochure, which will prove helpful when navigating the route to publication. Whether you have some experience of scholarly publishing or are a complete novice, this guide will provide you with essential information to make your journey to publication as smooth as possible.

#### This resource will:

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- guide you in selecting a journal that best suits your needs
- assist you in preparing your manuscript, so as to maximize your chance of being selected for publication
- familiarize you with editorial and ethical policies in scientific publishing
- maneuver you through the post-publication process
- steer you toward author resources

#### Good luck!



## Know your content

The first step in getting published is ensuring that you know your content. This means that you need to carefully evaluate the impact and findings of your research to ensure that you have a strong foundation on which to base your article.

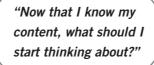
Ask yourself, does my research:

- Present new, original results or methods?
- Examine, question or refine existing published data?
- Provide new interpretations to already published results?
- Review a particular subject or field?

If you can answer "yes" to any of the previous questions, you can feel confident that you have a strong case for developing your article.

Now that you have a solid foundation, you need to develop a strong article. At this stage you need to build a skeletal structure for your article. This should be constructed by deciding what your article narrative is and determining the order and structure of your writing. The objective of creating this plan is to ensure that you produce a robust article to maximize your chances of acceptance.







## Select a Journal

Once you know your content and have thought carefully about your article structure, you should start thinking about which journal is most suitable for publication of your research. The best way to start this process is to determine which audiences you would like your article to reach and which journals you and your peers reference and read in your own research, as these publications may be appropriate for your own article. **Remember, you can only submit to one journal at a time!** 

Sources of information that you should consult to inform your decision of where to submit are listed below.



#### Aims and Scope

Each journal has a unique aims and scope and only articles that comply with that journal's aims and scope will be accepted. Often the aims and scope will highlight what type of article (e.g., review, case study, systematic review) and fields of research are published in that journal as well as what readers the journal reaches. Submissions to a journal that do not meet that publication's aims and scope are likely to be rejected. Also, journals will specify what article types they DON'T publish, so be sure your article type is accepted by the journal to which you are submitting.

#### **Guide to Authors**

Like the aims and scope, each journal has individual requirements for publication that are specified in the journal's Guide to Authors. The Guide to Authors contains information pertaining to publishing in that specific journal; this includes rules and regulations on ethics, conflicts of interest, changes to authorship, copyright and funding body agreements. Additionally, it includes instructions on article structure, abstract, highlights, keywords, video data and artwork and whether there are word and figure limits for article types.

#### **Colour Charges for Figures**

Some journals have nonrefundable submission charges. Others may charge a fee per figure or even per word. Many journals require payment to pubish images in color. You should check the Guide to Authors to ensure that you know what the charges are. "OK...is there anything else I need to know about?"

#### **Open Access**

Open access publishing allows free access to and distribution of published articles. In most cases, papers are published under a Creative Commons attribution license, which removes any barriers to access, so no subscription is needed to read the published content. Under this publication model the author or funder pays publication charges. Some funding bodies require that research they have funded be published only in open access journals. Aspiring authors need be aware of this when considering where to publish. In most cases, these charges can be found in the Guide to Authors.





#### **Editorial and Ethical Policies**

It is also essential to check the editorial policies concerning ethics of publication in journals to which you are considering submitting your research. These policies may include factors related to primary research such as authorship, duplicate publication, plagiarism, fabrication, digital image manipulation, competing financial interests, confidentiality and pre-publicity. If you are uncertain about whether you need ethical approval, you must seek advice from the appropriate advisory body.

#### Impact Factor

The quality of a journal is often spoken about in relation to its Impact Factor. The Impact Factor of a journal is calculated by dividing the number of current year citations to the source items published in that journal during the previous two years. It is an independent measure calculated by Thomson Reuters. However, there is some debate regarding the reliance on Impact Factor as the sole means of measuring a journal's quality. When making your first steps in scholarly publishing, it is advisable to primarily focus on matching your research with the aims and scope and readership of a journal.

#### **Read Recent Publications In Your Field**

Stay abreast of the latest articles published in journals in your field by signing up to electronic table of contents alerts. Alerts are sent each time a new issue of your selected journal publishes and list the latest table of contents, with direct links to the articles. This will provide some insight into whether your manuscript will fit with the type of articles a particular journal publishes.

"Right. So I know my content and I've decided where to submit! Can I start writing now?"



# Preparing to write, writing & submitting your paper

Before you get writing there are just a few more things you need to do...

#### **Develop Your Skeletal Plan**

At this stage you should now revisit your article plan and consider approximately how many words you want to use in each section. This will allow you to carefully manage your article structure and give the correct amount of coverage to each section of your article. This is especially important when writing for journals that adhere to strict word limits.





#### **Discuss Co-authorship Where Applicable**

When writing an article with others, it is helpful to agree to writing plans and deadlines with any co-authors. You should also agree how authors will be listed in the final article. Often the senior author or PI is listed last. For more details, please refer to the ICMJE guidelines on authorship (www.icmje.org).

#### **Remember the Reader**

Ensure that your article is easy to follow and targeted to your intended audience, as outlined in the aims and scope of the journal to which you intend to submit.

#### References

As you begin writing, you should ensure that you reference all of the sources that you are citing in your article correctly. To make this process as easy as possible, it is advisable to do this as you go along and then tidy up the list once the article is complete. Waiting until you have completed the article to list all of your references will be more difficult and time consuming. There are several software programs available to help make this easier; Endnote® and Reference Manager® are two such examples. Get Published! Get Writing! Navigate Your Way To Success.

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#### Now you can start writing but make sure that you:

#### **Keep Your Sentences Clear and Concise**

Don't be tempted to use too much jargon or over-complicate what you are trying to say. Precise text will give your article more impact.

#### **Draft and Redraft Your Work**

It is common for successful authors to spend time redrafting their work to ensure that the article flows as seamlessly as possible. Spending time refining your article is time well spent.

#### Select Your Title and Abstract

Your title will be the first thing a reader uses to determine whether to read the abstract and potentially your article, so it's important to get it right. Your abstract should be a concise summary of your manuscript and will be used with the title in relevant abstracting and indexing services. To ensure that your abstract reflects your final article, it is advisable to write this once you have finalized your manuscript.

*"I've finished writing! Can I submit now?"* 

> Once you finish writing, there can be a great sense of accomplishment and you may be tempted to submit your article right away. However, don't be too hasty. There are a few final crucial things to do before you submit.

Most important is editing. This process can be laborious but it is a key part of giving yourself the best chance of getting published. Editing ensures that you refine your article to make it the best that it can be. Be sure to check for any mistakes or typos. Below is the list of important factors to consider when editing your article.



#### **Explain Statements and Assumptions**

Ensure that any statements or assumptions you make are fully backed up. Journal editors and reviewers are attuned to unsubstantiated claims and may reject an article with numerous unsubstantiated claims.

#### **Spelling and Grammar**

Check your spelling and grammar. Although this might sound basic, it is surprising how often mistakes are found. If you have a friend or colleague who writes well, it may be worthwhile to ask them to proof your article for you. Especially if you are not a native English speaker, it is advisable to enlist a colleague or hire a language-editing service to help with the editing process.

#### **Remove Redundant Words and Phrasing**

Keep your writing as succinct as possible. Allowing your text to become too wordy will use up valuable space in your article and dilute your message by making it too vague.

#### **Be Careful How You Abbreviate Phrases**

When using abbreviations, spell out a term at its first use to ensure that there is no ambiguity over what the abbreviation means when used later in the paper.

#### Acknowledge Funding Bodies and Sources

If your work has been funded, it is crucial that you make the source of your funding clear. The Guide to Authors mentioned earlier will provide instructions on how to present your references. The full list of cited references will always need to appear at the end of your article.

#### **Check Copyright**

Ensure that you have permission to use any materials that have copyright regulations attached to them.

#### Select Key Words Carefully

To help readers find your article easily online, you may be required to provide key words for your article when submitting.

Once all of these checks are done, you are now ready to submit! You should submit your article to one journal at a time and await that publication's decision.

> "OK, OK. I've done my last checks thoroughly, so can I submit my article now?"

#### **Submitting Your Article**

When submitting your article it is recommended that you provide a succinct letter that highlights to the editor why the work is important and why it fits well with the journal.



"What happens to my article now it has been submitted?"

## Post-submission steps

#### **The Peer Review Process**

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Once you have submitted your article to a journal, you will normally receive an email from the journal's editorial office confirming receipt of your paper. Your article will then be sent to the editor, who will decide whether to send it out for peer review.

#### Manuscript Sent for Review

At this stage the editor of the journal may send your manuscript to reviewers. The amount of reviewers and the way that your article is presented will vary from title to title. Additionally, the time for an article to go through the peer review process varies greatly among journals. Most journals have a triaging process where papers determined to be inappropriate or outside the scope of the journal are rejected almost immediately. Many articles are never even sent out for review.

#### **Reviewing Process**

Once the reviewers have received your manuscript and considered it for publication, they will make recommendations to guide the editor to a decision on your submission. Based on the reviewer recommendations, the editorial office will communicate a decision to you, which will usually be one of the following.

#### **Unconditional Acceptance**

At this stage your article is sent for formatting in the house style of the journal and proofs are prepared. You will receive page proofs of your article once formatting is complete. (For co-authored projects, the lead author usually receives the proofs.) This is your last opportunity to correct any errors before publication. However, keep in mind that most journals allow very limited changes at this stage, making it imperative that your initial editing is thorough.

#### **Conditional Acceptance Pending Basic Changes**

It is very rare that a manuscript is accepted unconditionally. The majority of articles that are accepted will require at least basic revisions before final acceptance, so it is common for authors to go through this process in order to get their articles published. For simple revisions the editor will often decide whether to accept or reject a revised article without additional review.



#### **Conditional Acceptance Pending Extensive Changes**

Once you have completed your extensive revisions, it is advisable to provide a cover letter with the revised manuscript highlighting how you have responded to each suggested change. Where you have decided not to make a suggested amendment, you should provide details of why you have not made the change. For extensive or complex revisions, the article will often be sent back to reviewers for another review before a final decision is made.

Once your article has been accepted, you will receive a letter from the editor informing you of the decision, with accompanying forms that you will need to complete prior to publication. In addition to any copyright or licensing forms, journals that require page or color charges, or that offer open access, will require payment forms.

#### Rejected

An article is usually rejected because it doesn't fit with the journal's aims and scope, the presentation is weak, the quality of the content is not acceptable or the paper fails to offer new or novel enough contributions to warrant publication.

If you are rejected, do not lose heart. Keep in mind that the review process is not perfect and many excellent articles are rejected upon first submission. Rejections can be very disheartening, but it is important to understand the reasons for rejection that are provided by reviewers. Reviewers are often leading professionals and academics in the field, and by following their advice you are more likely to be successful in future writing endeavors.



#### OFFICIAL JOURNALS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADIAN ACADEMY OF PATHOLOGY

Submitting your research to *Laboratory Investigation* and *Modern Pathology* 

Please visit the journal websites and see the **Instructions for Authors** to read more about the Aims & Scopes and how to prepare your article. When you are ready to submit an article please go to **Online Submission**.



Advancing the understanding of human and experimental disease

Editor-in-Chief: Gene P. Siegal, MD, PhD

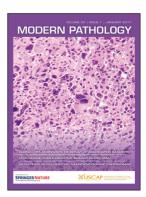
Laboratory Investigation is an international journal publishing high-quality original research in all biomedical disciplines relating to the understanding of human disease and the application of new methods to the diagnosis of disease.

#### www.nature.com/labinvest

Publishing innovative clinical and translational research in the pathology of human disease

Editor-in-Chief: John N. Eble, MD, MBA

*Modern Pathology* provides a forum for the understanding of the pathologic processes and evaluation of new and existing diagnostic applications of scientific advances and clinical pathologic correlations. The journal aims to foster the acquisition and maintenance of up-to-date information to ensure high standards of practice.



#### www.nature.com/modpathol



## SPRINGER NATURE



Is the journal a good fit for your research?

#### Laboratory Investigation publishes:

- Original research exploring mechanisms of disease pathogenesis, including: structural and molecular pathogenesis of disease; mechanisms underlying the morphologic manifestations of disease; and translation of basic research findings into advances in assessment of human disease by laboratory diagnostic methodologies.
- Technical Reports of novel technical advances in the diagnosis of human disease or in the investigation of human or experimental disease.
- Mini-Reviews and Review Articles
- Pathobiology in Focus (by invitation only): a series of succinct critical reviews, commentaries, or controversies in mechanisms of human disease, as well as updates on seminal technological breakthroughs. The intent of this series is to facilitate understanding and discussion on burgeoning issues in science with an emphasis on disease mechanisms.

Have you seen what's new at www.uscap.org?

The United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP) is committed to innovation, immersed in next generation learning to create tomorrow's best pathologists.

Explore the site to learn more about the educational and professional resources available to USCAP members, and for member access to *Laboratory Investigation* and *Modern Pathology*.

### **MODERN PATHOLOGY**



Is the journal a good fit for your research?

*Modern Pathology* concentrates on all aspects of diagnostic human pathology, focused on contemporary issues pertinent to diagnostic accuracy. The journal publishes original articles and reviews.

Topics include:

- Studies of pathologic processes
- Evaluation of new and existing diagnostic applications
- Clinical pathologic correlations

Submit your next manuscript to *Laboratory Investigation* or *Modern Pathology* and benefit from:

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Watch this video to hear directly from our Editors and previous authors about the benefits of submitting to *Modern Pathology* and *Laboratory Investigation*: **bit.ly/USCAP-author-video** 

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