

Webinar | April 2018

# How to Get Your Research Published

## Tips and Guidance for Academic Writing

| Moderator |



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| Speaker |



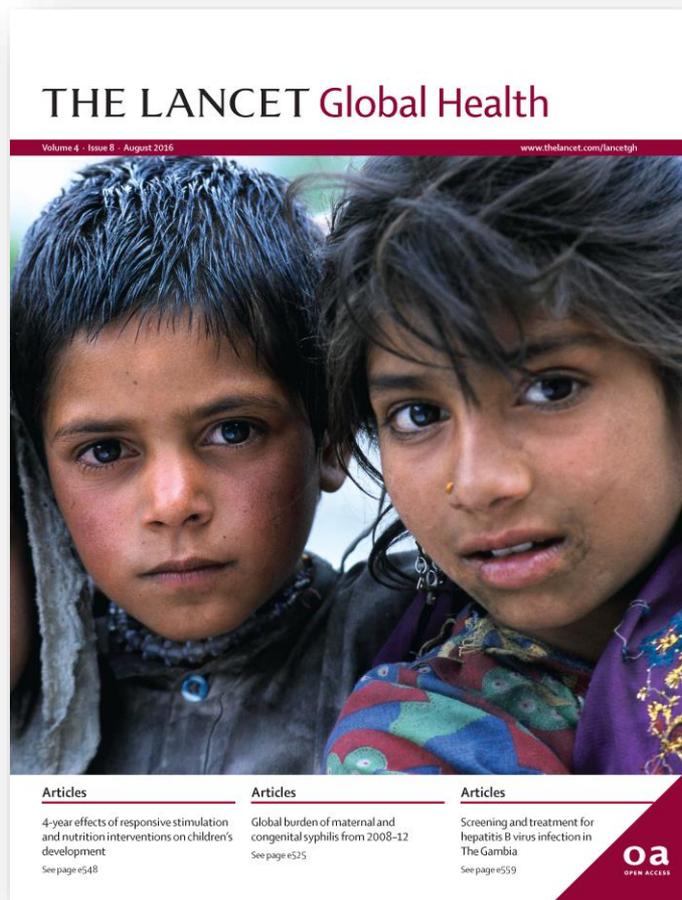
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# Content

- A brief introduction to *The Lancet Global Health*
- What editors of leading journals look for
- Basic manuscript structure
- How to avoid predators...
- Q&A

# *The Lancet Global Health*



Launched in 2013

Publishing eight research articles per month

Online-only

Open access

>100,000 “subscribers”

30K Twitter followers

Impact factor 17

# What do editors of leading journals look for?

# Manuscript flow at *The Lancet*



# Top-level triage

Relevance to the readership (read aims and scope and information for authors)

*“The Lancet Global Health features original research, commentary, and correspondence, and our content is complemented by regular blog posts. Our focus is on disadvantaged populations, be they whole economic regions or marginalised groups within otherwise prosperous nations, with a preference for the following topics: reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health; infectious diseases, including neglected tropical diseases; non-communicable diseases; mental health; the global health workforce; health systems; surgery; and health policy.”*

# Standing out from the crowd

Is it novel?

- New treatment or prevention technique
- New population
- New knowledge of disease distribution (epi)
- New knowledge of the future (modelling)

**“These findings  
confirm the work  
of...”**



# A solid base

## Robust methodology

- Sample size (statistical power)
- Study design (controls? validation? assumptions?)
- Generalisability (remember audience)



# Need to know

## Responsible reporting

- Ethics approval
- Informed consent
- Registration ahead of recruitment (for trials)
- Adherence to reporting guidelines



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# Reporting guidelines



## Reporting guidelines for main study types

<a href="#">Randomised trials</a>	<a href="#">CONSORT</a>	<a href="#">Extensions</a>
<a href="#">Observational studies</a>	<a href="#">STROBE</a>	<a href="#">Extensions</a>
<a href="#">Systematic reviews</a>	<a href="#">PRISMA</a>	<a href="#">Extensions</a>
<a href="#">Case reports</a>	<a href="#">CARE</a>	<a href="#">Extensions</a>
<a href="#">Qualitative research</a>	<a href="#">SRQR</a>	<a href="#">COREQ</a>
<a href="#">Diagnostic / prognostic studies</a>	<a href="#">STARD</a>	<a href="#">TRIPOD</a>
<a href="#">Quality improvement studies</a>	<a href="#">SQUIRE</a>	
<a href="#">Economic evaluations</a>	<a href="#">CHEERS</a>	
<a href="#">Animal pre-clinical studies</a>	<a href="#">ARRIVE</a>	
<a href="#">Study protocols</a>	<a href="#">SPIRIT</a>	<a href="#">PRISMA-P</a>
<a href="#">Clinical practice guidelines</a>	<a href="#">AGREE</a>	<a href="#">RIGHT</a>

<http://www.equator-network.org/toolkits/writing-research/>

# The bottom line

## Definitive

- Last word
- Not necessarily a positive (relevant negatives change research direction or stop clinicians doing something)

**“More research is needed...”**



# What are we looking for?

- An answer to a **relevant question** in an **important population** in the **appropriate way** at an **opportune time**
- To get to the end and understand “why bother?” and “so what?”
- A missing piece in the puzzle

# Avoiding waste

**THE LANCET**

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## REWARD

Priorities | Design conduct analysis | Regulation & management | Accessibility | Complete & usable reporting | Action & recommendations | Statement

### The REWARD Statement

We recognise that, while we strive for excellence in research, there is much that needs to be done to reduce waste and increase the value of our contributions. We maximise our research potential when:

- we set the right research priorities;
- we use robust research design, conduct and analysis;
- regulation and management are proportionate to risks;
- all information on research methods and findings are accessible;
- reports of research are complete and usable.

We believe we have a responsibility not just to seek to advance knowledge, but also to advance the practice of research itself. This will contribute to improvement in the health and lives of all peoples, everywhere. As funders, regulators, commercial organisations, publishers, editors, researchers, research users and others – we commit to playing our part in increasing value and reducing waste in research.”

### Partners

**REWARD**  
REduce research Waste  
And Reward Diligence

**Nuffield Department of Population Health NDPH**  
**Athena SWAN**  
Bronze Award

**BioMed Central**  
The Open Access Publisher

**NHS**  
Health Research Authority

**Cochrane**

**equator network**

**SPiRiT**  
STANDARD PROTOCOL ITEMS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONAL TRIALS

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**Libros & Colecciones TREATISE**

# Avoiding waste

- “An efficient system of research should address health problems of importance to populations and the interventions and outcomes considered important by patients and clinicians”
- “New research should not be done unless, at the time it is initiated, the questions it proposes to address cannot be answered satisfactorily with existing evidence”
- Up to 85% of research is a waste of time, money, and patients’ goodwill

Chalmers I, Glasziou P. Avoidable waste in the production and reporting of research evidence. *Lancet* 2009; **374**: 86–89

# Research in context

First find your incomplete jigsaw!

## **Evidence before this study**

**This section should include a description of all the evidence that the authors considered before undertaking this study.** Authors should state: the sources (databases, journal or book reference lists, etc) searched; the criteria used to include or exclude studies (including the exact start and end dates of the search), which should not be limited to English language publications; the search terms used; the quality (risk of bias) of that evidence; and the pooled estimate derived from meta-analysis of the evidence, if appropriate.

## **Added value of this study**

Authors should describe here how their findings add value to the existing evidence (including an updated meta-analysis, if appropriate).

## **Implications of all the available evidence**

Authors should state the implications for practice or policy and future research of their study combined with existing evidence.

# Basic manuscript structure

# Manuscript flow

Tell us a story!

- *Introduction*: this is the problem, this is what has already been published about it, and here's why this study needed doing
- *Methods*: this is exactly what we did (dates, population, geographical area, analyses, outcomes measured)
- *Results*: refer back to methods and present in a logical order
- *And*
- *Discussion*: bottom line, limitations, context, what next?

# Effective titles

- Are informative but concise
- Adequately describe content and study design
- Do not use technical jargon and rarely-used abbreviations

# Crack the abstract

## Written last, read first

- Make sure it accurately reflects the paper
- Don't use abbreviations if you can help it
- State the aim of your study prominently
- Add enough detail for a new reader to be able to follow what you did (show someone outside your specialty?)
- Put some actual data in the findings part
- Confidently state the implications of the work (but don't overinterpret)

# Methods and results

- Each part of the method must have a result (and vice versa)
- Refer to reporting guidelines (see EQUATOR) for guidance on structure
- Only report the investigations done in the current study
- Avoid any interpretation or speculation in these sections

# Discussion

- Begin by summing up your main findings
- Discuss their relevance to existing work and, if they conflict with that work, try to explore why
- Mention limitations (reviewers will only point out their omission – get in first!)
- Mention strengths – set your work apart
- Do not introduce findings not mentioned in the Results
- Be careful not to include statements that go beyond what the results can support
- Finish with the implications and what should happen next (try to avoid “further research needed”!)

# General principles

- What is the point?
- Tell a story
- Refer to reporting guidelines
- Don't worry about perfect English – as long as the research can be understood (ask a friend), the English can be polished in-house
- Choose your journal wisely and study the journal's information for authors
- Beware of predatory journals

# Watch out for predators...

“Dear Dr. Zoë Mullan,

Greetings from Archives of Nursing and care!!

We are inviting a **limited group of scientists** who have made promising contributions **in the field of Nursing and care research** for our inaugural issue release. In this context, **we have come across one of your interesting publications** and are really impressed with your work and hope **publishing your research in our journal would increase journal quality and reputation.**”

Rohrich RJ, Weinstein AG. Predator-in-Chief: wolves in editors' clothing. *Plast Reconstruct Surg Glob Open* 2018; **6**: e1652

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PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY - GLOBAL OPEN

# Warning signs

- Peer review is not mentioned in the Instructions for Authors.
- Little or no information is provided regarding the editor or editorial board.
- The journal publishes either an unusually small, unusually large, or markedly variable numbers of articles each year.
- You or your colleagues have received formulaic e-mail solicitations for submissions that do not specify an interest in particular projects or areas that you are working on.
- Promised routine turnaround times for review and publication are so rapid that they seem “too good to be true” and would be unlikely to encompass the time necessary for true peer review.
- The name of the journal is very similar to the name of a well-known, established journal with a good reputation.

Laine C, Winker MA. Identifying predatory or pseudo-journals. <http://www.wame.org/identifying-predatory-or-pseudo-journals>.

# Think, check, submit

- Do you or your colleagues know the journal?
- Have you read any articles in the journal before?
- Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?
- Are articles indexed in services that you use?
- Is it clear what fees will be charged?
- Have you heard of the editorial board members?
- Do the editorial board mention the journal on their own websites?
- Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative? Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)? Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)?

<http://thinkchecksubmit.org/check/>

# Further resources

Researcher Academy

Learn

Career path

Blog

Zoe Mullan



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FOR RESEARCH



PUBLICATION  
PROCESS



NAVIGATING  
PEER REVIEW



COMMUNICATING  
YOUR RESEARCH



<https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/>

# How to Get Your Research Published

## Tips and Guidance for Academic Writing

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