From submission to publication

Mary Nishikawa, MA, ELS
Board Certified Editor in the Life Sciences
Customer Education Specialist, Academia
Cactus Communications K.K.

Presented by:
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Lecturer Introduction

Mary Nishikawa
Board Certified Editor
Trainer, Academia
Over 25 years of experience in the review, editing, and rewriting of biomedical research reports

Understanding the concerns researchers and academics have and helping them publish in top SCI journals such as Science and Cell
Objectives

You will learn

A. How journals process and review papers
B. How to write a cover letter
C. How to write a response letter for a revised draft
   – Addressing the journal editor
   – Responding to peer reviewer comments

Overview of steps in the processing and review

- Step 1. Check for completeness
  - Author
  - Editorial staff
  - Editor
  - Peer Reviewers
  - Decision letter: Immediately Rejected
  - Decision letter: Accepted – No review!
  - Step 3. In review (1 or more rounds)
  - Step 4. Final decision

- Step 2. To review or not
  - YES
  - NO
  - Maybe
Step 1. Check for completeness


Journal checklist

✓ Once Item of note -- English OK?

Journal checklist

Any problems?

• Incorrect article type

• Missing a study registration, statement of informed consent, approval by ethics committee (human) or statement concerning humane treatment (animals)

• Paper is a duplicate

• Potential conflicts though authors report none

Step 2. First decision: To review or not
Your research must match the journal’s

- Aims
- Scope

Your research should also

- Use correct methodology
- Be original
The DECISION

- Peer review – NO!
  - Unconditional acceptance
  - Outright rejection
    - Not in scope, not new
    - Not scientifically valid

- Peer review – YES!
  - Fast track papers
  - Average papers
    - In scope
    - Not in scope but of interest
  - Below average papers
    - Some problems, but a review might help

Step 3. The peer review
The ideal peer reviewer
Makes an initial assessment

• “Who would be interesting in reading the paper, and why?”
• “Are the claims novel? If not, which published papers compromise novelty?”
• “Are the claims convincing? If not, what further evidence is needed?”

Peer review policies of Nature Publishing group
http://www.nature.com/authors/policies/peer_review.html

The ideal peer reviewer
identifies positive and negative aspects

• Are the assumptions, methods, and underlying theoretical framework reasonable?
• Are the conclusions supported by the results?
• Do text and graphics support, not detract from each other?

“If making a criticism, try to offer concrete accurate actionable ways to address the problem.”

Nicholas KA, Gordon W. MA. A quick guide to writing a solid peer review. EOS Transactions 2011;92,233-240.
Step 4. The decision

The ideal journal editor considers reviewers’ recommendations

• Makes the final decision
  – Reconsiders aims and scope
  – Considers how the authors revised the paper to address the concerns of peer reviewers
Remember the steps...

- ✓ Step 1  Check for completeness
- ✓ Step 2 The decision to review
- ✓ Step 3 Peer review
- ✓ Step 4 Decision after the review

Objectives

You will learn

A. How journals process and review papers
B. How to write a cover letter
C. How to write a response letter for the revised draft
   - Addressing the journal editor
   - Responding to peer reviewer comments
Cover letter: Opening

- Date of submission
- Editor’s name & designation
  - John Smith, MD
  - Editor-in-Chief
- Salutation
  - Dear Dr./Prof./Mr./Ms. initial and last name
  - Dear Dr. J. Smith:
- Formal request
  - We would like you to consider the manuscript [“title”] for publication in [journal name]

[Date]

[Editor’s name]
[Editor’s designation]
[Insert Journal name]

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms:

I, along with my coauthors, [Delete the phrase on coauthors for single-author papers] would like to ask you to consider the attached manuscript entitled “[Insert title of the manuscript in bold]” for publication in [Insert journal name in italics] as a _________. [Insert the manuscript type here – case report, original article, review, etc.]
Body: Why and Whom

1. Aim and findings of study
2. Reasons for selecting the journal
3. Listing of recommended and non-preferred reviewers

Body

[Briefly describe the aims and findings of the study, in about 2 to 3 sentences.]

[Insert the information explaining the motivation for submission to this journal, in not more than 2 to 3 sentences. “We believe that the findings of this study are relevant to the scope of your journal and will be of interest to its readership.”

Please consider, as potential referees, _______.]
Closing: Ethical statements

- Original, unpublished paper
- Approval by ethics review board
- Potential conflicts of interest
- All authors take responsibility

Closing

This manuscript has not been published or presented elsewhere in part or in entirety, and is not under consideration by another journal. All study participants provided informed consent, and the study design was approved by the appropriate ethics review boards. All the authors have approved the manuscript and agree with submission to your journal. Authors have disclosed any potential conflicts of interest, financial or personal, or declared that there are none to disclose, in relation to the publishing of this research.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
[Author’s name]
[Affiliation]
[Postal address]
[Phone number]
[Fax number]

All statements must be true!
**Remember to include**

- Brief aim and findings in 2 or 3 sentences
- Reasons for selecting that particular journal
- List of recommended and any non-preferred reviewers
- Any disclosures and statement that the paper has not been published elsewhere
- A statement that all authors had read and approved the paper

**Aim**

**You will learn**

**A.** How journals process and review papers

**B.** How to write a cover letter

**C.** How to write a resubmission letter for the revised draft
   - Addressing the journal editor
   - Responding to peer reviewer comments
How to respond to reviewer comments

Reviewers are advisors

• Assess manuscripts
• Do not assess authors
• Advise journal editor


Reviewer comments to author

• Summarize paper and provide general, positive comments

• Point out inconsistencies that require clarification

• Point out inaccuracies, missing information, or potential ethical issues

• Point out language, style, and formatting problems, if there are any
Reviewer 1

Summary of study, including good points

Point 1: Please explain inconsistencies between table 1 data and number in text.

Point 2: Please add the clinical significance of the study to your discussion.

Point 3: Please state the name of the institution approving the study and be more specific about what they had approved.

Point 4: There are a few awkward expressions and typographical and formatting errors. Please get assistance from a professional editor.

Positive comment from peer reviewer

– Your tables & figures and interpretation of results are commendable.
Inconsistences requiring clarification

– The weight for defining macrosomia in infants in the USA is ≥4500 g. Please explain why you used the value ≥4000 g.

Pointed out methodology errors: Inappropriate

– I can’t believe you used that statistical test. This report is worthless.
Point out methodology errors: Appropriate

- Please review your hypothesis statement and reconsider the statistical test that you have selected. If possible, get help from a professional statistician.

Point out language errors: Inappropriate

- Your English is obviously bad. It is obvious you are Asian!
Pointed out language errors: Appropriate

- Your introduction requires better logical ordering. If possible, get help from a professional editor.

Reviewer recommendations to editor

- Accept with minor revisions
- Accept with major revisions
- Reject (will accept after additional tests or analyses)
- Reject (Faulty research design, insufficient number of subjects, non registration of a trial)
Structure of the response letter

2 separate documents

Cover Letter (for journal editor)
Review 1
Comment 1
Review 2
Comment 1

1 document with 2 sections

Section 1 (for journal editor)
Section 2 (responses to specific points)

Cover letter to journal editor

Dear Dr. [Name of Editor],
I appreciate the opportunity for resubmission of my manuscript [Manuscript ID] entitled [manuscript title].

I would like to thank the referees for their valuable inputs. We have addressed all the comments to the best of our ability. Please find enclosed a copy of the revised manuscript with in-text modifications highlighted. We have also enclosed a separate document containing point-by-point responses to the reviewer comments.

Sincerely,
Your name
Title
Attachments:
[revised manuscript; response document ]
Responding to reviewer comments

Reviewer 1 general comment
Response

Reviewer 1 Comment 1
Response
All authors agree/disagree with your feedback. See page 1, line 2-4 for revision in text.

1 Original words are here.
2 These are the additional words that were added to the document. These are the original words.

Page 1

Make sure you don’t leave anything out!

Reviewer 1 Summary of study, including good points

Thank you for summarizing our paper and mentioning the essential points. We agree with your assessment of point A, but your interpretation of point B was different from our intention. We have revised sentences on page 1 lines 5-10 to better reflect our meaning.

Point 1: Please explain inconsistencies between table 1 data and number in text.

You are correct in pointing out this difference. This was a typographic error. We have corrected it in the sentence on page 5 line 15.
Reviewer 1

Point 2: Please add the clinical significance of the study to your discussion.

We agree with your request. We have added a paragraph discussing the clinical significance of the study on page 12 lines 20-35.

Point 3: Please state the name of the institution approving the study and be more specific about what they had approved.

Thank you for pointing out this oversight on our part. We have added the details on page 2 lines 10-12.

Reviewer 1

Point 4: There are a few awkward expressions and typographical and formatting errors. Please get assistance from a professional editor.

We have contacted a professional editing service that has helped us fix the awkward expression and typographical and formatting errors. We mention these changes in notes in the paper.
Take home message

✓ A journal’s manuscript guidelines and any specific reporting guidelines are there to help you publish. Read and use

✓ Be meticulous in the writing and review of your own paper

References: Peer review and manuscript management


• Peer review policies of Nature Publishing group. Available from: http://www.nature.com/authors/policies/peer_review.html

• Nicholas KA, Gordon W. MA. A quick guide to writing a solid peer review. EOS Transactions 2011;92,233-240.
References: General style guides


References: English writing


References: Paper structure

• Foote MA. How to make a proper introduction. *Chest* 2007;130:1935-1937.


https://www.brighttalk.com/channel/9615/editage-webinars

• How to prepare for a submission (2015.12.17) [link]

• How to select the right journal + core inefficiency of peer review (2016.04.27; 11 am JST) [link]

• How to write an effective abstract (2016.02.25; 2:30 pm) [link]

• Words are the building blocks of sentences (2015.11.10) [link]
https://www.brighttalk.com/channel/9615/editage-webinars

- Sentences are the building blocks of paragraphs (2015.06.29)
  https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/9615/161557

- Improving logic, clarity, and flow in paragraphs: The art of macroediting (2016.03.17)
  https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/9615/193733

- Research misconduct: Know it to avoid it (2015.06.29)
  https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/9615/158547

- How to create oral and poster presentations for international meetings (2015.04.28)
  https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/9615/150719

Contact Details

Mary Nishikawa, MA, ELS
Board Certified Editor in the Life Sciences
Customer Education Specialist, Academia
Promoter of good publication practices

nishikawa@caactus.co.jp
URL: http://www.editage.jp/