

SD4H Scientific Writing Course
October 31- November 4, 2022

Journal Submission, Peer Review & Authorship

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Journal Choice: General Considerations

- ❖ Editors and reviewers look for original and innovative research that will contribute to the field of study
- ❖ Research-based papers
 - Ensure that you have enough numbers to justify sound statistical conclusions
- ❖ Larger studies papers
 - May be better to produce one important research paper rather than several average incremental papers

Journal Choice: Specific Considerations

- ❖ Field
 - Biomedical, psychological, social science, statistical
- ❖ Focus
 - HIV/AIDS-focused *or* general audience
- ❖ Audience
 - International *or* home country
- ❖ Competitiveness
 - Aim high then go lower *or* go for “sure thing”
- ❖ Timing
 - Quick response *or* long wait
- ❖ Luck

Choosing a Scientific Journal

- ❖ Check references section in proposal
- ❖ Ask mentors, professors, supervisors
- ❖ Check requirements: word count, length
 - Full-length original research article
 - Brief Report
 - Data Letter
 - Letter to the Editor
- ❖ Sponsored supplements

Biomedical Journals

- ❖ General audience
- ❖ International
- ❖ Very competitive
- ❖ Examples:
 - New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)
 - British Medical Journal (BMJ)
 - Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)
 - Lancet
 - Science
 - Nature
 - Cell

Public Health Journals

- ❖ Epidemiology, infectious diseases
- ❖ Moderately competitive
- ❖ Examples:
 - American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)
 - Lancet Global Health
 - Journal of Infectious Diseases (JID)
 - Clinical Infectious Diseases (CID)
 - Lancet Infectious Diseases
 - PLoS Medicine

HIV/AIDS Focused Journals

❖ Clinical and behavioral

❖ Examples:

- Lancet HIV
- AIDS
- Journal of the International AIDS Society (JIAS)
- AIDS and Behavior
- Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (JAIDS)
- AIDS Care

Priorities for Journal Selection

- ❖ Impact factor
 - Number of citations in 1 year for all articles divided by number of articles published in last 2 years
- ❖ Reputation
- ❖ Access to target audience
- ❖ International coverage
- ❖ Publication speed
- ❖ Open access
 - Articles freely available online throughout the world

Manuscript Submission

- ❖ Almost all journals use online submission
- ❖ Follow all the “Instructions to Authors” guidelines
- ❖ Proofread for typographical errors, consistent use of abbreviations, formatting of references
- ❖ Use the journal’s manuscript checklist
- ❖ Cover letter
 - State category of paper (full article, brief report, letter)
 - Briefly summarize aims and findings
 - Include all information requested by journal
 - Conflict of interest statement
 - Co-authors authorship criteria certification

Authorship Criteria

- ❖ Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- ❖ Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- ❖ Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- ❖ 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.

Authorship Order

- ❖ Best: First and Corresponding Author, responsible for the paper
- ❖ 2nd Best: Last/Senior Author, PI, conceptualized the idea
- ❖ 3rd Best: Second Author
- ❖ 4th Best: Third Author, many reference format lists only the first three authors by name
- ❖ Remaining authors are listed according to level of contribution

Alternative to Authorship

❖ Group Authorship

- Can add many authors
- “...and the Maneno Yetu Study Team”

❖ Acknowledgements

- For individuals who contributed to the work but do not meet all the authorship criteria
- Many journals require consent from individuals who are listed in the acknowledgements section

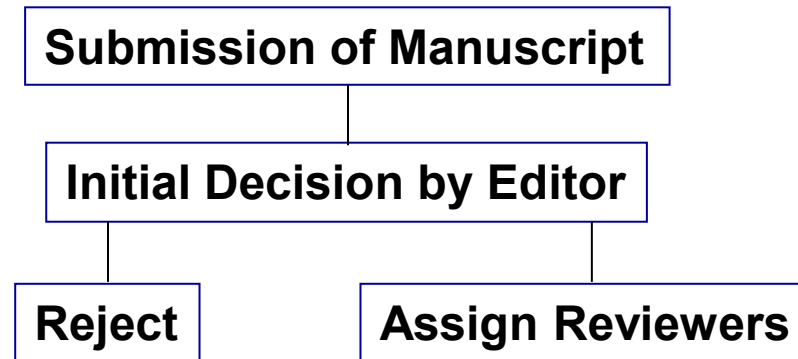
Overview of Peer Review Process

Submission of Manuscript

Initial Decision by Editor

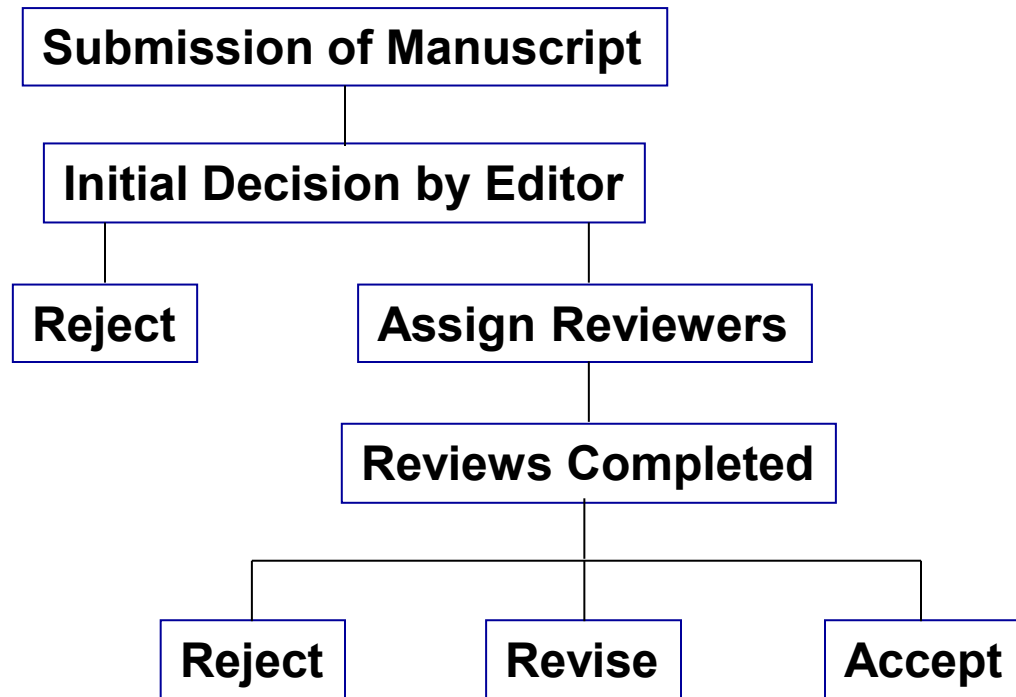
- ❖ Most journal editors will make an initial decision to reject or send a manuscript for review
- ❖ Reasons for rejection without review
 - Outside the scope of interest of the journal's readers
 - Poorly written manuscript

Overview of Peer Review Process



- ❖ Manuscript sent to 2-3 reviewers in relevant field of expertise to evaluate scientific merit
- ❖ Sometimes manuscript also sent to statistical reviewer to evaluate statistical aspects
- ❖ Potential reviewers
 - Authors who have successfully published in journal
 - Reviewers referred by the primary reviewers
 - Reviewers suggested by the corresponding author

Overview of Peer Review Process



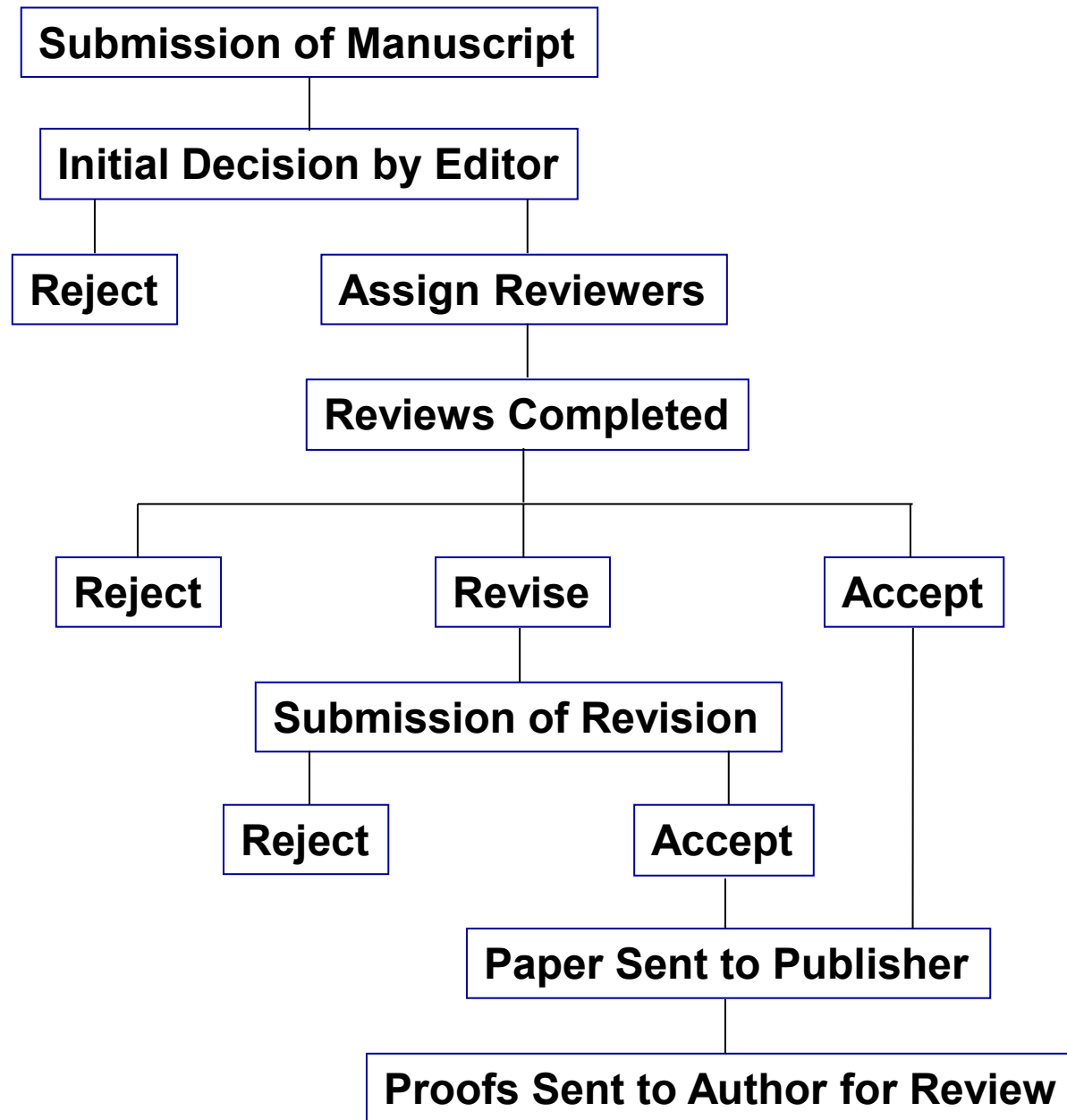
❖ Editor's Decisions

- Reject
- Accept without revision (rarely happens)
- Accept conditionally pending revision in response to reviewer comments
- Reconsider pending revision in response to reviewer comments

Response to Reviewer Comments

- ❖ Address all reviewer comments, even ones you may disagree with
- ❖ Identify criticisms and suggestions that need to be considered seriously
- ❖ Make sure response is articulated clearly
- ❖ Detail changes made in revised manuscript or reasons for not making changes
- ❖ Indicate where changes were made (section, page number, line number)
- ❖ Have someone read response to check for tone

Overview of Peer Review Process



Page Proofs

- ❖ Accepted manuscripts are copyedited by journal/publisher staff
- ❖ Page proofs are sent to authors for corrections
 - Fully-formatted layout as article will appear in journal
 - Proofs must be returned within 48 hours of receipt
- ❖ Review proofs carefully
 - Respond to all editor/publisher queries
 - Correct copyediting errors
 - Compare proof to submitted manuscript for accuracy
 - Check content and layout of tables
 - Check figures properly oriented with correct legends

Maximizing Publication Chances

❖ Writing style

- Be clear and concise
- Proofread carefully before submitting

❖ Manuscript format

- Consider brief reports
 - Easier to communicate most important point
 - Journals can accept more papers in this format

❖ Response to peer reviewers

- Respond to every comment whether you agree or not
- Be thorough, thoughtful and diplomatic

