

Submitting to a Journal: Tips from an Editor

FETP Writing Workshop
Pakse, Laos

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Emerging Infectious Diseases

Take Home Points

Follow each journal's instructions for authors:

- Respect word count (within 5%)
- Include Author Checklist.

Write a strong abstract.

Seek professional English editing services.

Identifying a Target Journal

- Decide early
- Consider journals that have published work on your reference list.
- TIP: Higher prestige journal? Aim for shorter format.

Access—Some Aspects

- Open accessibility
 - May need to pay author fees.
- Searchability
- Many OA journals charge author fees
 - Be cautious of journal scams.

Using the Journal's Instructions

- Read the instructions to authors before starting to prepare your paper.
- Consult the instructions while preparing your paper.
- Check the instructions again before submitting your paper.

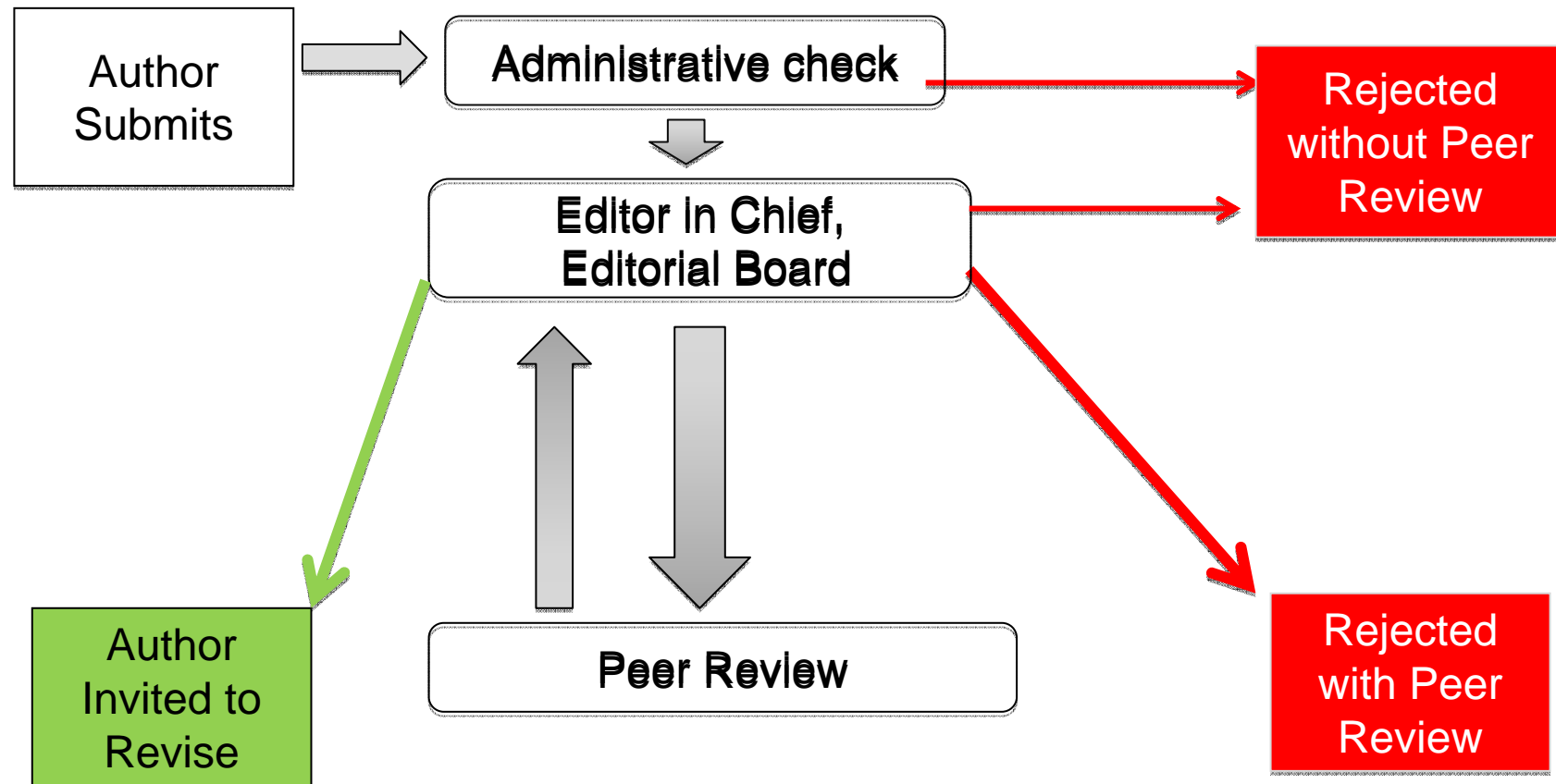
Some Questions Instructions May Answer

- What article types?
- Maximum length of each type?
- Maximum length of abstract?
- What sections should include?

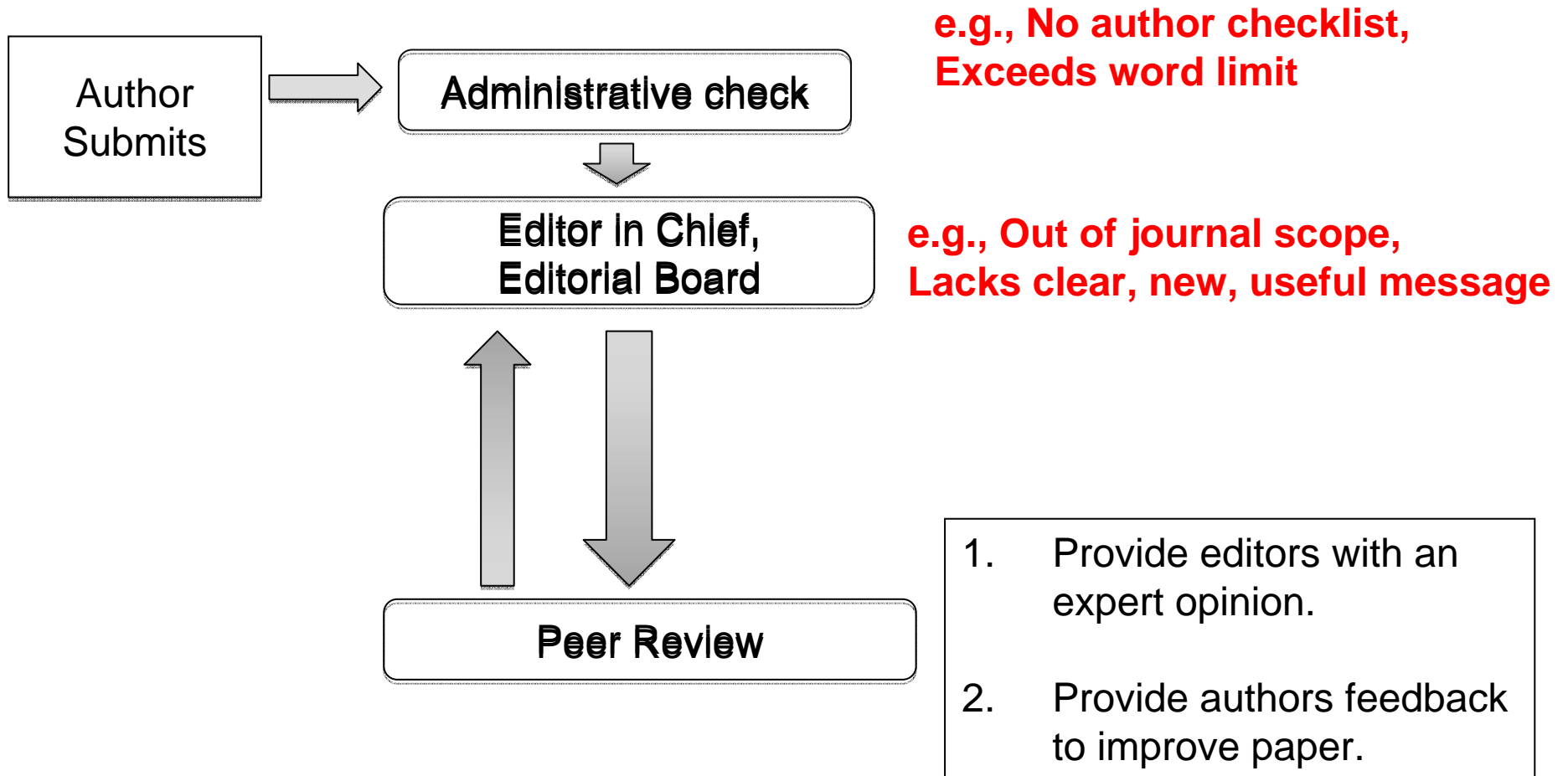
Beyond the Instructions

- Look at recent issues of target journal for the same article type you plan to write.
- Gear your paper to the journal.
 - Structures of titles
 - Lengths of each section
 - Numbers of figures and tables (appendices?)
 - Technical level of writing

Submission Flow to First Decision, Peer-reviewed Journal



Concerns at Each Level of Review



NOTE: Decisions at all levels are affected by clarity of writing and Compliance with journal guidelines.

Editor in Chief (EIC)

Screens manuscripts **by title and abstract.**

- Message within journal scope?
- New message?
- Length worth message?

TIP: Write your abstract to target the priorities of journal.

Editorial Board Member

Evaluates manuscript more thoroughly.
More likely to read cover letter.

Rejects or assign reviewers.

Makes decision recommendation to Chief based on reviewers ratings, comments and other considerations.

- Accept if suitably revised
- Reconsider if revised
- Reject

Peer Reviewer Selection

- Authors who published in same journal.
- PubMed-indexed authors on same topic.
- Higher prestige journal, tougher reviewers.

TIP: Suggest 1-3 possible reviewers from another country (not former advisor or friend).

Common Author Errors - Introduction

- Too long (>2-3 paragraphs).
- Poor justification for conducting study.
 - How work differs from published work.
 - What gap paper intends to fill.
 - Why work important.

Common Errors - Methods

- Sample inclusion/exclusion criteria not described.
- Analysis plan not explained meaningfully.
 - E.g. only report what statistical package used.
- No ethics committee approval/waiver mentioned.

Common Errors - Results

- No explanations for ineligible or excluded cases.
 - Eg. “Our study was based on 300 stool specimens from children admitted with diarrhea.”

Common Errors - Discussion

- Repeats text from Introduction or Results
- No description of limitations and their potential impact on interpretation of results.
- Makes claim of primacy.
 - E.g., “We are the first study to describe measles seroprevalence among military recruits in Shanghai, China.”

Abstract

- First step to getting peer reviewed.
- Grammatically the most important part of paper to get correct.
- Can use for pre-submission queries.

Ethical Concerns

- Researchers who copy construction of sentences by cutting and pasting do not understand that such practices may lead to plagiarism.
- Author publishes data in own language and tries to publish again in English-language journal.
 - OK if both journals agree.

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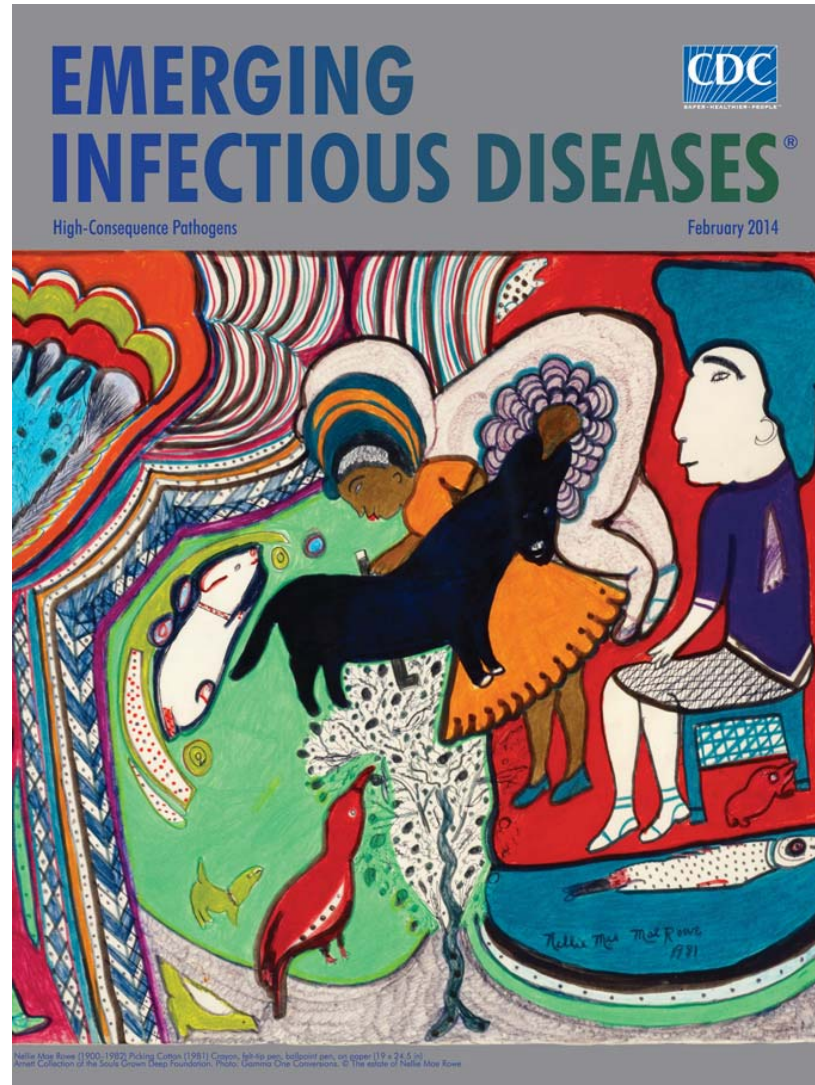
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Writing Resources

- Luby, S., Southern, D. Pathway to Publishing: Guide to Quantitative Writing. CDC-GDD-icddr-b Bangladesh. May 2012.
 - THE BEST I'VE SEEN!
- Zeigler, M. Essentials of Writing Scientific Research Papers.
 - Good for basics, however examples are from biomedical research, not public health
- BA Super Help Desk
<http://ssc.bibalex.org/helpdesk/introduction.jsf>

Thank you

Send me
your
country's
art for our
cover!



Extra Slides

Resources

- EID Author Resource Center (not just EID material)
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/pages/author-resource-center.htm>
- COPE - (Committee on Publication Ethics) provides advice to editors and publishers on all aspects of publication ethics.
- CROSSCHECK: an initiative to help its members detect and prevent scholarly plagiarism.
<Http://www.crossref.org/crosscheck/index.html>
- ICJME <http://icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/responsibilities-in-the-submission-and-peer-review-process.html#one>
- ORCID - provides a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other researcher. <http://orcid.org/>

Public Library of Science (PLOS)

Open Access APC

- PLOS fee waived: <http://www.plos.org/group-one-countries/> (Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic, Vietnam, Cambodia)
- \$500 flat fee: <http://www.plos.org/group-two-countries/> Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, India.
- China and US pay full fees: <http://www.plos.org/publications/publication-fees/>
 - *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* \$2250

Common Errors after Resubmission

- Abstract and Title not revised to reflect modifications in main manuscript.
- Response states “the revised text incorporates these changes” without pasting them into point by point response letter.
- Authors do not report in cover letter changes they initiated independent of reviewer comments.
- Word limit exceeded after address reviewers’ comments.