



Invited Editorial

An Insight into the Editorial Process: Literary Enigma and Challenges

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INTRODUCTION

For an Editor, getting a manuscript prepared, revised, and finalized for publication can be an enigmatic as well a challenging process. The first step in managing a medical journal is setting the strategic direction. This involves aligning the journal's mission with the evolving needs of the academic and clinical communities. As Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of a journal, it is imperative to define the journal's scope – what types of research we aim to publish, such as original studies, reviews, case reports, or clinical guidelines. It is important that our content is both scientifically rigorous and directly applicable to clinical practice. The editorial vision is shaped by ongoing trends in medicine, global health challenges, and emerging technologies. Editorial policies, such as ethical guidelines, conflict-of-interest declarations, and submission criteria, which help maintain the integrity and quality of the journal, are also established. As the EIC, he provides the strategic supervision, leadership, ethical oversight, and final decision making.^[1]

Each issue is deliberately planned. The editorial process involves careful preparation and coordination with various contributors, from guest editors to authors. Selecting themes and topics are important to maintain the journal's standard and improve readership. For each issue, the EIC works with the editorial board or guest editors to select a relevant and timely theme – such as a breakthrough in heart failure research or a new approach to cardiovascular care. This thematic focus attracts high-quality submissions and ensures the journal remains relevant. A formal call for papers may be done to invite authors to submit their research based on the selected theme. This call is advertised through the journal's website, social media, and professional networks to encourage contributions from experts in the field. Clear deadlines for submission, peer review, and revision are then set. Planning the editorial calendar and keeping track of timelines ensures that issues are published on schedule and that each phase of the editorial process is efficiently managed.^[2]

EDITOR'S CHIEF ROLE IS MANAGING THE WORKFLOW

The workflow involves managing the submission, review, and revision of manuscripts. As the EIC, it is his responsibility to maintain the integrity of the process while ensuring efficiency and daily continuity. When submissions come in, he performs an initial review to assess their relevance to the journal's scope and adherence to submission guidelines. The quality and originality of the work is likewise assessed before it proceeds to peer review, which comprises one of the most important aspects of the editorial workflow. The EIC manages the selection of expert reviewers,

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ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge to evaluate the manuscript rigorously. The review process is crucial to maintaining scientific integrity. He also institutes a fair and transparent review process, ensuring that authors receive constructive feedback and that the process is unbiased. Based on reviewers' feedback, the EIC works with the managing editor and associate editors to make final decisions on manuscripts. This might include acceptance, minor revisions, major revisions, or rejection. He has the responsibility to ensure that the feedback to authors is clear, professional, and respectful, fostering an environment of collaboration.

SETTING TIMELINES

The deadlines for submission, peer review, and revision must be clearly set. But the tune changes when submitting to a "top" multidisciplinary journal, as laid out in Table 1.^[3] As documented by the Editor of the journal "Nature," where nearly 170 manuscripts are submitted per week, nearly 70% are rejected without any peer review process, at the editor's stage itself, within a week. Only 5% of the total manuscripts are published each week.^[4]

EDITORIAL OFFICE CHECKS MANUSCRIPT AGAINST JOURNAL REQUIREMENTS

The novelty of the manuscript is compared to the state of play in the field. It is important for an Editor to keep in mind that the manuscript chosen presents new research findings, reviews, and critical discussions in various scientific

fields, and will add to the advancement of science and medicine. In addition, most journals will put the manuscript through plagiarism detection, first as a technical check step [Flowchart 1].^[5]

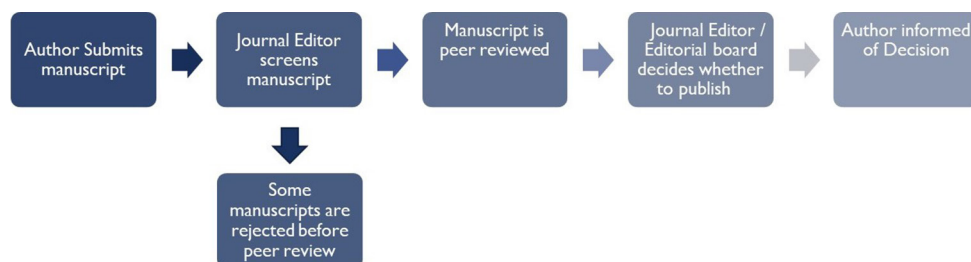
UNPACKING SCIENTIFIC IMPACT: NOVELTY, GENERALITY, AND VALIDITY

Scientific editors are responsible for the content and policies of journals and for deciding which articles to publish. Journals provide a foundation for scientific progress. Publishing evidence is critical for the progress of science. Moreover, this is where any journal becomes relevant in terms of public health.

EXECUTION AND PUBLICATION

Accepted articles undergo manuscript editing and copyediting for clarity, structure, and adherence to the journal's formatting and style. In copyediting, attention is paid to grammar, spelling, and ensuring that the manuscript meets publishing standards. Once the manuscript has been edited, it is proofread for any final issues. The manuscript is then formatted and typeset for both print and online versions. Graphics, tables, and figures are checked for clarity, accuracy, and adherence to journal guidelines. Once everything is in order, the EIC gives the final approval for publication. The issue is then scheduled for release. At this stage, he then puts effort in promoting the issue through various channels such as social media, email newsletters, and collaborations with relevant academic and clinical organizations.

Table 1: You have a different game to play when submitting to a "top" multidisciplinary journal.			
Nature	Science	New England journal of medicine	Most specialist journals
Impact factor - 49.96	Impact factor - 47.73	Impact factor - 91.25	Lower impact factors
75% rejected before specialist review 7% overall publication rate	80% rejected before specialist review 7% overall publication rate	10% rejected before specialist review 5% overall publication rate	Very low rejection rate before specialist review
Mostly, staff editors make decisions	Staff editors and the academic editorial board make decisions	Staff editors pass to the physician editorial team for decisions	Academics acting as specialist editors make decisions



Flowchart 1: Peer review and editorial decision-making at journals.

CHALLENGES IN THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

Managing a medical journal is not without its challenges. The EIC must navigate issues like handling a large number of submissions while maintaining editorial quality. This requires careful time management and effective delegation to associate editors. It is imperative to look into the volume of submission, maintaining the reviewer quality and ensuring that reviewers remain impartial, thorough, fair and constructive. With the rapid pace of medical innovation, journals must constantly evolve to reflect the latest research trends and global health priorities.^[6,7]

THE ENIGMA OF IMPACT FACTOR OF A JOURNAL

Getting the correct value of a journal ascertained by the indexing authorities remains a huge challenge to the EIC. The Editor and Publishers work in tandem cohesively, to achieve this enigma of higher indexing of the journals. The editorial team's profile, regularity of publication, and whether the journal is peer-reviewed or not, along with the relevance and topicality of the contents are the main parameters involved in the editorial process, leading to higher indexing by the Institute of Scientific information (ISI) database authorities.

From the EIC's perspective, the editorial process is a dynamic, multifaceted journey that requires strategic vision, collaboration, and attention to detail. Scientific journals contribute to scientific progress. Through effective editorial management, journals can help advance knowledge. Every publication is an opportunity to educate, to advance science, and improve public health.

By setting clear directions, carefully planning issues, managing an efficient workflow, and executing publication tasks with precision, we ensure that the journal continues

to be a respected source of high-quality, relevant medical research. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute meaningfully to the academic and clinical communities by providing a platform for the dissemination of important medical knowledge that can improve patient care and healthcare systems globally.^[8,9]

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