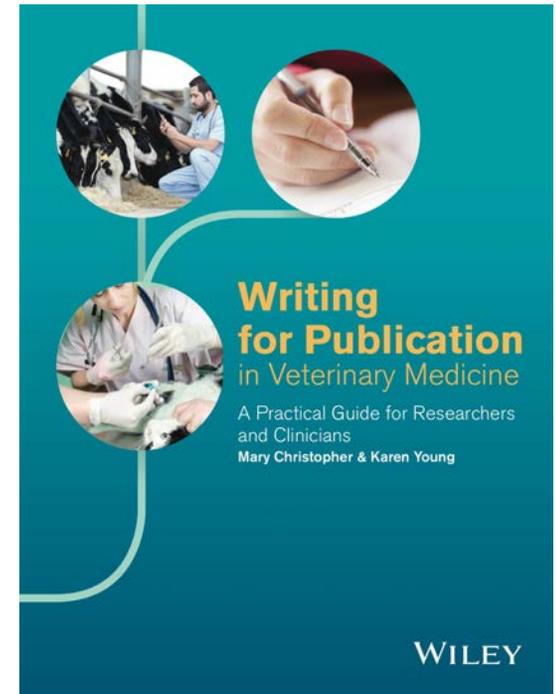


# Editing a Scientific Journal

## *Leading and Shaping Your Discipline*



Mary M. Christopher, DVM, PhD



Karen M. Young, VMD, PhD





جامعة القاهرة  
Cairo University

# Why a workshop for journal editors?

- Most of us work as academics, are part-time editors, lack specific training
- Editors face common challenges, but often lack the network, support, and resources to solve them
- Editors face pressure from authors and publishers to meet publication needs while maintaining integrity
- The world of publishing is changing rapidly

# Journal editors as leaders

- Authority in the scientific community
- Exercise editorial independence
- Expertise in research
- Responsible for the integrity of published records
- Power to formulate and implement editorial policies
- Promote good research and publishing



# Editor-in-chief

- Is solely responsible for the scientific content of the journal
- Maintains a high standard of scientific and ethical rigor
- Provides leadership in implementing a vision for the journal to advance its mission



# The editorial board



# Organization of editorial workflow

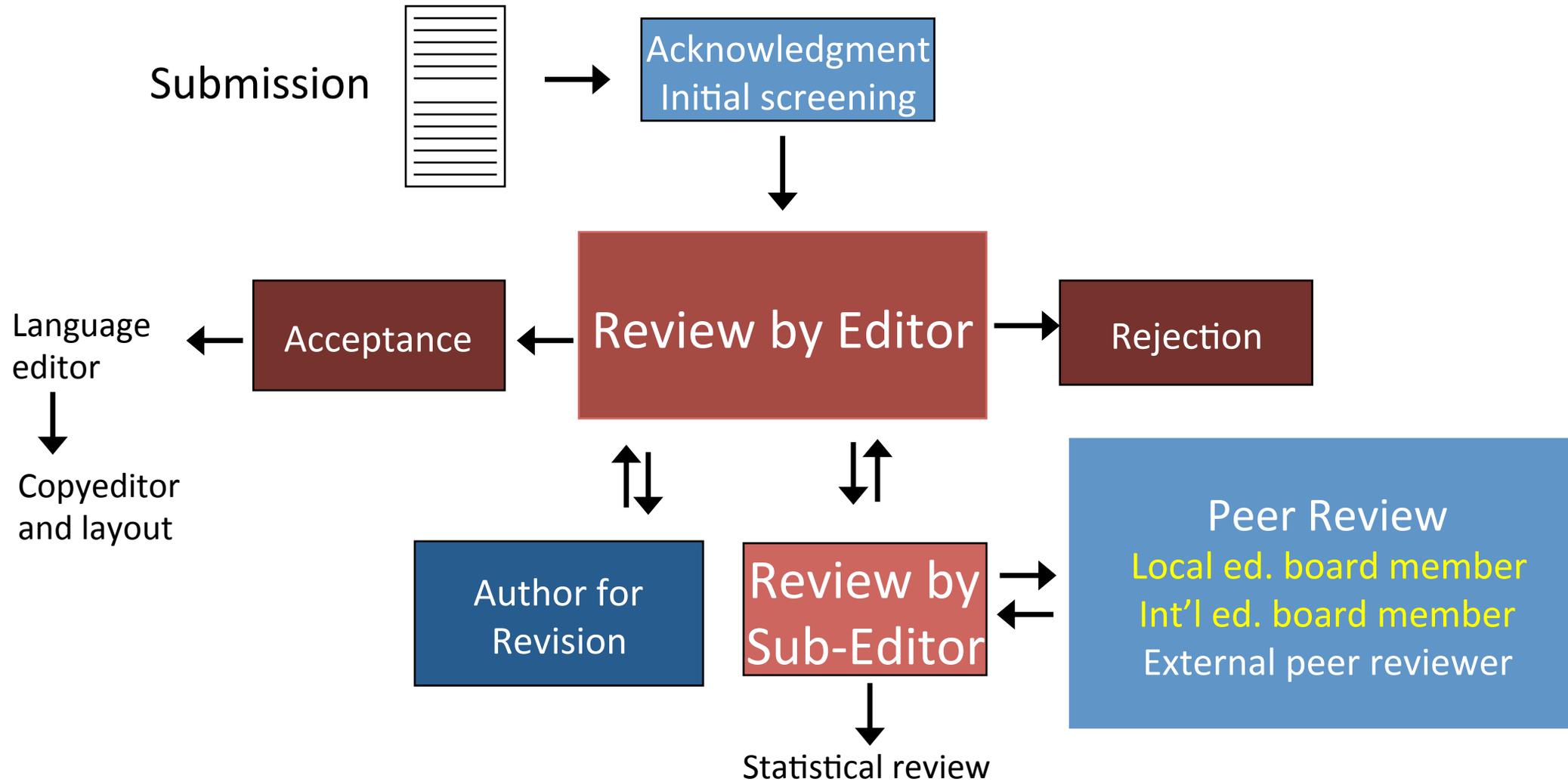
- Who will log-in and screen manuscripts?
- What are the responsibilities of the Sub-Editors?
- Who oversees the peer review process?
- Who handles correspondence with authors?
- Who makes the decisions to accept/reject manuscripts?
- Who establishes journal policies?
- What is the role of the editorial board?
- Who edits manuscripts (for content, language, style)?

# How does your editorial board work?

Create an editorial “workflow” diagram for your journal

- Who will log-in and screen manuscripts?
- What are the responsibilities of the Sub-Editors?
- Who oversees the peer review process?
- Who handles correspondence with authors?
- Who makes the decisions to accept/reject manuscripts?
- Who establishes journal policies?
- What is the role of the editorial board?
- Who edits manuscripts (for content, language, style)?

# An editorial workflow



Which step in your workflow presents the biggest challenge?

What is your biggest challenge in working with your editorial board?

# Optimize your editorial board

## Structure

- Create organizational chart
- Sub-editors as appropriate to handle/distribute workflow
- Editorial board composition
  - Publication experience
  - Topical scope
  - Specialty expertise
  - Geographic balance
  - Gender balance

## Function

- Define roles, tasks, and terms
- Use your editorial board
- Define policies for conflict-of-interest
- Assess and balance workload and effectiveness periodically
- Hold editorial board meetings
  - Seek feedback
  - Editorial policy and direction
  - Report journal progress and goals

# Acknowledge your editorial board

- Stipend
- Honoraria
- Publishing perks
  - Free publication in journal
  - Invited publication
- Regular board meetings
- Acknowledge within society/organization

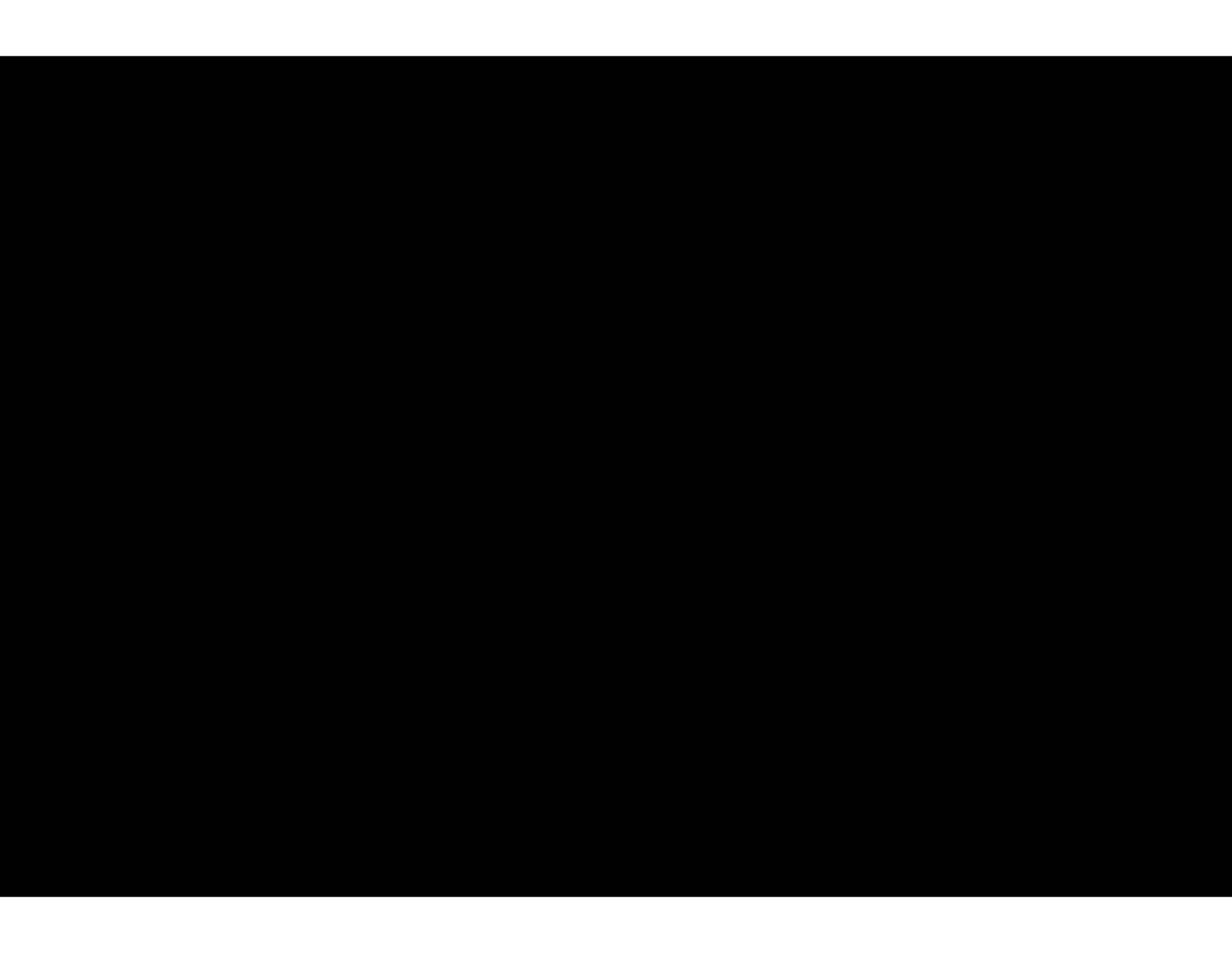


# Editors as educators

- Editors educate:
  - authors
  - readers
  - reviewers
  - researchers
  - students
  - policymakers



- Promote high quality research and publishing



# Peer Review: Definition

Evaluation of manuscripts by peers (“experts”) in similar or relevant fields

Scientific quality, validation of research

Importance to the field



# Peer Review: Purpose

Improve and enrich scientific publications

- Aids editors in making decisions

- Helps authors improve scientific quality and writing

Promote networking within scientific communities

Contribute to the learning process for scientific writing

Encourage discussion of scientific hypothesis, design, methods, analysis, and conclusions if review is open

# Peer Review: Role of the Editor

Establish the best system for your journal

- Determine the type of peer review (blinded, open)
- Guide sub-editors in how to select reviewers: number of reviewers, varied expertise
- Guide reviewers in aspects to evaluate and expected professional/constructive input

# Peer Review: Role of the Editor

Establish the best system for your journal

- Establish and update a database of reviewers
- Establish timeframes for review
- Use peer review to make decisions
- Communicate with reviewers: expectations, share other reviews, decision, appreciation

# Peer Review: Models

## Single-blinded

Reviewers aware of authors and their institutions

Authors blinded to reviewers

## Double-blinded

Authors and reviewers blinded to each other

## Triple-blinded (not in practice...yet)

Editors, authors, and reviewers blinded

# Peer Review: Models

## Open

Reviewers (and sometimes their reviews) known to authors (and the readership) somewhere in the process

## Post-publication

Users can post comments after publication

# Single-Blinded Peer Review

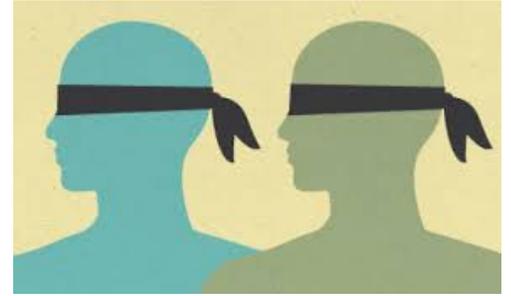
## Advantages

- Honest candid reviews
- Ease of administration (no need to remove identifying elements from the manuscript)

## Disadvantages

- Biased reviews
- Unprofessional, vitriolic comments

# Double-Blinded Peer Review



## Advantages

- Less (or no) bias – perceived as a “fairer” process
- Reviewer focused on content (authors/institutions not a distraction)

## Disadvantages

- Reviewers can sometimes or often identify the authors
- Administrative work (often burden to blind is placed on the authors)
- Unprofessional comments can still be a problem
- No convincing evidence that quality of reviews is higher
- More difficult to identify conflicts of interest and self-plagiarism

# Bias

Nationality/country of origin

Gender

Competing scientific or commercial interest

Perceived reputation of the institution

English usage

Stage of career

Positive bias if senior author well known in field

*Bias often “implicit” – not acknowledged by the individual harboring the bias*



The following clause(s) have been added to the Code of Conduct for Journal Editors and will be incorporated into the Code at the next revision. Editorial decisions should not be affected by the origins of the manuscript, including the nationality, ethnicity, political beliefs, race, or religion of the authors. Decisions to edit and publish should not be determined by the policies of governments or other agencies outside of the journal itself (July 2013)

# Triple-Blinded Peer Review

Not in use yet, but recommended by some as even editors can have biases

Would require a separate “log-in” editor who handles communication with author and selects reviewers but plays no role in reviewing the manuscript or making decisions

# Open Peer Review



## Advantages

- Review tends to be more constructive
- Promotes transparent discussion of merits and flaws

## Disadvantages

- Reviewers may be reluctant to voice legitimate criticisms
- Invitations to review may be declined more frequently
- Fear of retaliation

# Post-Publication Reviews

## Advantages

- Promotes transparent discussion of merits and flaws
- Opens the review process to anyone

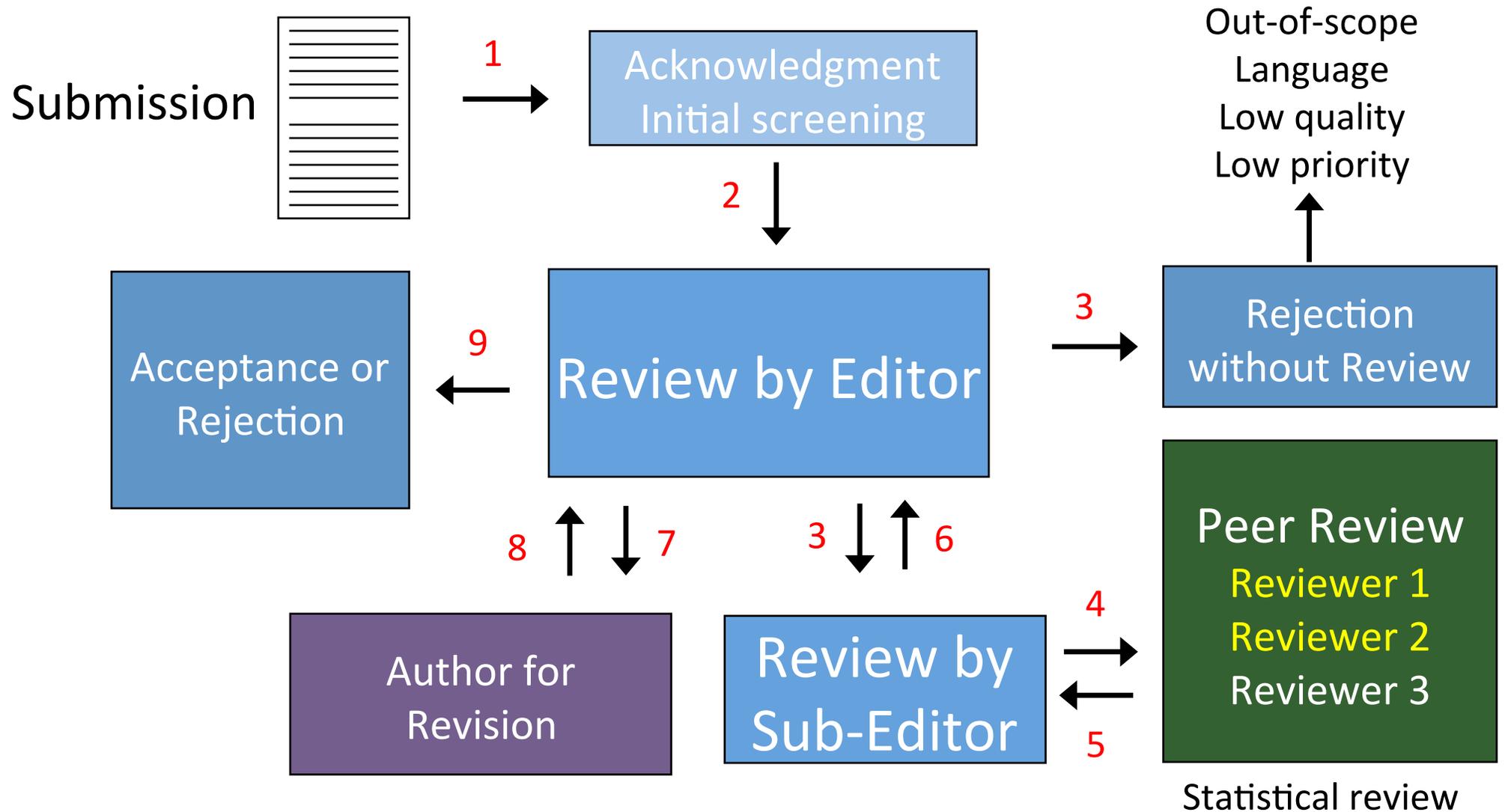
## Disadvantages

- Paper is already published and cannot be revised
- Debate may be endless
- Quality of reviews uncontrolled

# Type of Peer Review

<b>Peer Review Type</b>	<b>Who is blinded?</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Best Fit for Your Journal</b>
Single-blinded	Only authors			
Double-blinded	Authors, reviewers			
Triple-blinded	Authors, reviewers, editors			
Open	No one, timing varies			
Post-publication	No one, comments posted after publication			

# Typical Peer-Review Process



# What content is reviewed?

- Original research
- Brief communications
- Case reports
- Review articles: narrative and systematic

But typically not....

- Editorials
- Letters to the editor
- Features and news
- Conference abstracts and proceedings

# Who are your reviewers?

- Editorial Board members
- Reviewers in databases
  - Build and update your own
  - Search PubMed and other databases
- Reviewers suggested by other reviewers
- Authors of cited references
- Preferred reviewers suggested by authors  
(but check qualifications of suggested reviewers)

# Who are your reviewers?

*The BMJ* (formerly the *British Medical Journal*)

- Experimenting with “patient” reviews
- Individuals living with or experience with a disease or significant illness, care-providers, patient advocates
- Goal: to improve relevance and patient centeredness of medical research



# Selection of Reviewers

## Different vantage points

Choose reviewers with different areas of relevant expertise

## Statistical reviewers

## Avoid conflicts of interest

Same institution, collaborators

Ask reviewers to declare conflicts of interest

# Selection of Reviewers

Acta Veterinaria-Beograd 2017, 67 (1), 33-42

UDK: 636.09:050"2010/2014"; 615.33.015.8

DOI: 10.1515/acve-2017-0004

*Research article*

## **EXAMINATION OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES WITH RESPECT TO STATISTICAL ERRORS IN VETERINARY SCIENCES**

ERCAN Ilker<sup>1\*</sup>, KAYA Mehmet Onur<sup>2,6</sup>, UZABACI Ender<sup>3,6</sup>, MANKIR Seray<sup>4</sup>, CAN Fatma Ezgi<sup>5,6</sup>, BASHIR ALBISHIR Musa<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Biostatistics, Uludag University Faculty of Medicine, Bursa, Turkey; <sup>2</sup>Department of Biostatistics, Bezmialem Vakıf University Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul, Turkey; <sup>3</sup>Department of Biostatistics, Uludag University Faculty of Veterinary, Bursa, Turkey; <sup>4</sup>Department of Statistics, Anadolu University Faculty of Sciences, Eskişehir, Turkey; <sup>5</sup>Department of Biostatistics, İzmir Katip Celebi University Faculty of Medicine, İzmir, Turkey; <sup>6</sup>Department of Biostatistics, Uludag University Institute of Health Sciences, Bursa, Turkey

(Received 23 May, Accepted 07 December 2016)

# Incentives for Reviewers

- Engagement in scientific enterprise
- Expected contribution to profession
- Is more needed? Acknowledgment, access to articles, Publons, other rewards, ...

# Working with Reviewers

Communicate what you want evaluated:

- Scientific quality, validity: design, methods, conclusions
- Originality/novelty/innovation
- Importance to field
- Organization, tables and figures, appropriate and valid references
- Language usage, clear writing
- Ethical practices
- Constructive comments; professionalism

# Working with Reviewers

Communicate your decision

(accept, minor revision, major revision, reject)

Share all the reviews with each reviewer

Thank the reviewers!

# Reviews are returned – now what?

Advisory to editor, who makes final decision

Reviewers can't vote on the decision – it's yours!

Quality of reviews: Did you receive the input you needed?

# Reviews are returned – now what?

Advisory to editor, who makes final decision

Reviewers can't vote on the decision – it's yours!

Quality of reviews: Did you receive the input you needed?

Discordant reviews – one reviewer recommends 'major revision'; another recommends 'accept'

\* The author(s) should not see the reviewers' recommendations about acceptance, but they will see the disparate comments. What will you do?

# Discordant reviews are returned

The editor is the final arbiter and has multiple options:

- Consider the strengths of the reviewers and evaluate their comments accordingly
- If reviews are adequate, provide guidance to the author on how to prioritize the reviewer comments
- May need to solicit an additional review to resolve the conflicting reviews
- If a reviewer is consistently not helpful or unprofessional, consider providing feedback to the reviewer.



# Advantages to Reviewer

Learn to:

- Read a manuscript carefully  
identifying main message and supporting evidence
- Evaluate a manuscript as you read for  
organization, clarity, precision, persuasion
- Improve your own writing by recognizing strengths  
and weaknesses of someone else's manuscript

Learn new stuff!

# Guidelines and Training for Reviewers

## Provide guidelines to reviewers

- Author Guidelines: Reviewers should read them
- Detailed peer review guidelines (journal website)
- Checklists, specific questions, guided review form



# Guidelines and Training for Reviewers

Provide guidelines to reviewers

- Author Guidelines: Reviewers should read them
- Detailed peer review guidelines (journal website)
- Checklists, specific questions, guided review form

*Consider asking reviewer to begin by:*

- *Summarizing the main findings (to be certain reviewer has understood the article)*
- *Strengths*
- *Areas for improvement*

*before listing the detailed comments*

***The Werewolf Journal***  
**Manuscript Review Form**

**MANUSCRIPT NO:** 1890

**TITLE:** Biochemical parameters in neonatal werewolf cubs (*Lycanthrope* sp.)

**AUTHORS:** I.M. Investigator, et al.

	Yes	Unsure	No
The study is important			
Sufficient new information			
Tables and figures are necessary and appropriate			
Statistical analysis is appropriate			
Appropriate for the journal's readers			

**Recommendation:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Accept as is

\_\_\_\_\_ Minor revisions

\_\_\_\_\_ Major revisions

\_\_\_\_\_ Reject

**CONFIDENTIAL COMMENTS FOR THE EDITOR:**

This study provides important new physiologic data of interest to readers. With substantive revision to address study design and animal selection and sampling details, I believe the study merits publication.

## COMMENTS FOR THE AUTHORS:

### General comments:

*(What they did)* The authors have determined glucose and protein values in neonatal werewolves between birth and weaning and evaluated age-related differences over time and between neonates and adults. *(The positives)* These findings update and expand previous work in this area and have important diagnostic implications for neonatal werewolf medicine. *(The negatives)* Of concern is the small size and limited diversity of the population evaluated. In addition, important details need to be clarified in methods. *(The directive)* With the addition of a hypothesis and added methodological detail, the validity of the study design and results can be better assessed.

### Major comments: *Organize by manuscript section or by importance*

1. The study lacks a hypothesis, which is important for determining whether study design is appropriate.
2. Methods: Inclusion and exclusion criteria must be clearly defined. How was it determined that the werewolves were healthy?

### Minor comments: *Not needed if serious major flaws are identified*

1. Page 2, line 5: What was the source of the shewolves and where were they housed?
2. The authors are referred to Carlson et al (*Werewolf J* 1995;77:7) for a good discussion on prioritizing laboratory tests for neonates.
3. A few spelling and typographical errors are noted throughout the manuscript.

# Guidelines and Training for Reviewers

## Provide guidelines to reviewers

- Areas for comments to authors and confidential comments to editor
- Reviewer's recommendation – only to editor (not to authors) – reject, major revision, minor revision, accept

# Guidelines and Training for Reviewers

Stress importance of confidentiality

Training for reviewers

- Institutional, publishers, Publons, organizations (Cochrane)
- Share other reviews with reviewer

There is a need to evaluate the impact of training programs on quality of peer reviews

## Peer review training

# WILEY

Peer review is a good opportunity for early career researchers to play a role in the research community and gain experience to help improve your own research writing. If you would like to get involved in peer review or are looking for tips to get a great review, we have many resources for you including the following:

### Guide to peer review

Three-part introductory video series on the basics of peer review

Part I: [Why Peer Review](#)  
Part II: [The Peer Review Process](#)  
Part III: [Types of Peer Review](#)

### Top tips for peer review

Our top ten tips for being a great reviewer

[Video](#)  
[Infographic](#)  
[Blog Post](#)

### A practical guide to peer review for early career researchers

Detailed information on the peer review process, how to write a peer review, and the most common dos and don'ts

[Webinar](#)

### Trust and transparency in peer review

Explore the foundations of trust in peer review, with expert speakers sharing their different perspectives

[Webinar](#)

### From peer to peer: advice for new reviewers

Journal editors and researchers answer questions on peer review

Videos: [Advice for New Reviewers](#), [Challenging Aspects of Peer Review](#)

[Webinar](#)

### Getting recognition for peer reviewing

Experts at Wiley, PubLons and ORCID discuss how to get recognition for reviewing

[Webinar](#)

## Guidelines for peer reviewers

### COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

[COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers - English](#) [PDF, 145 KB, Version 2, September 2017.]

[COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers - Chinese](#) [PDF, 648KB, Version 1, February 2017]

[DETAILS](#)



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## Free Online Course on Journal Peer Review

publons

Search or Import



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## WELCOME TO PUBLONS ACADEMY

Become a master of peer review

[SIGN UP](#)



START BUILDING YOUR PROFILE AS AN EXPERT IN YOUR FIELD



CONNECT WITH TOP JOURNAL EDITORS



WORK WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR TO COMPLETE YOUR FIRST REAL REVIEWS

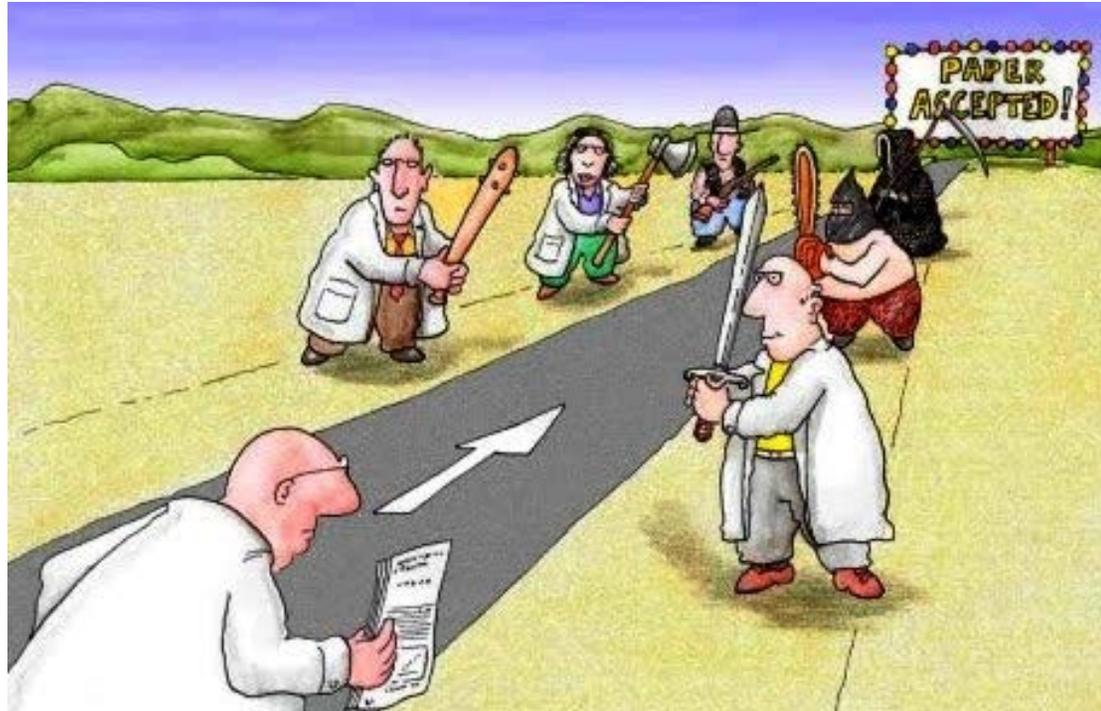
The Publons Academy is a practical peer review training course for early career researchers developed together with expert academics and editors to teach you the core competencies and skills needed of a peer reviewer.

# Peer Review

Process can be slow, subjective, uneven, inadequate ...



# Is peer review a perfect system?



No...but it's the best system we have and remains in wide use

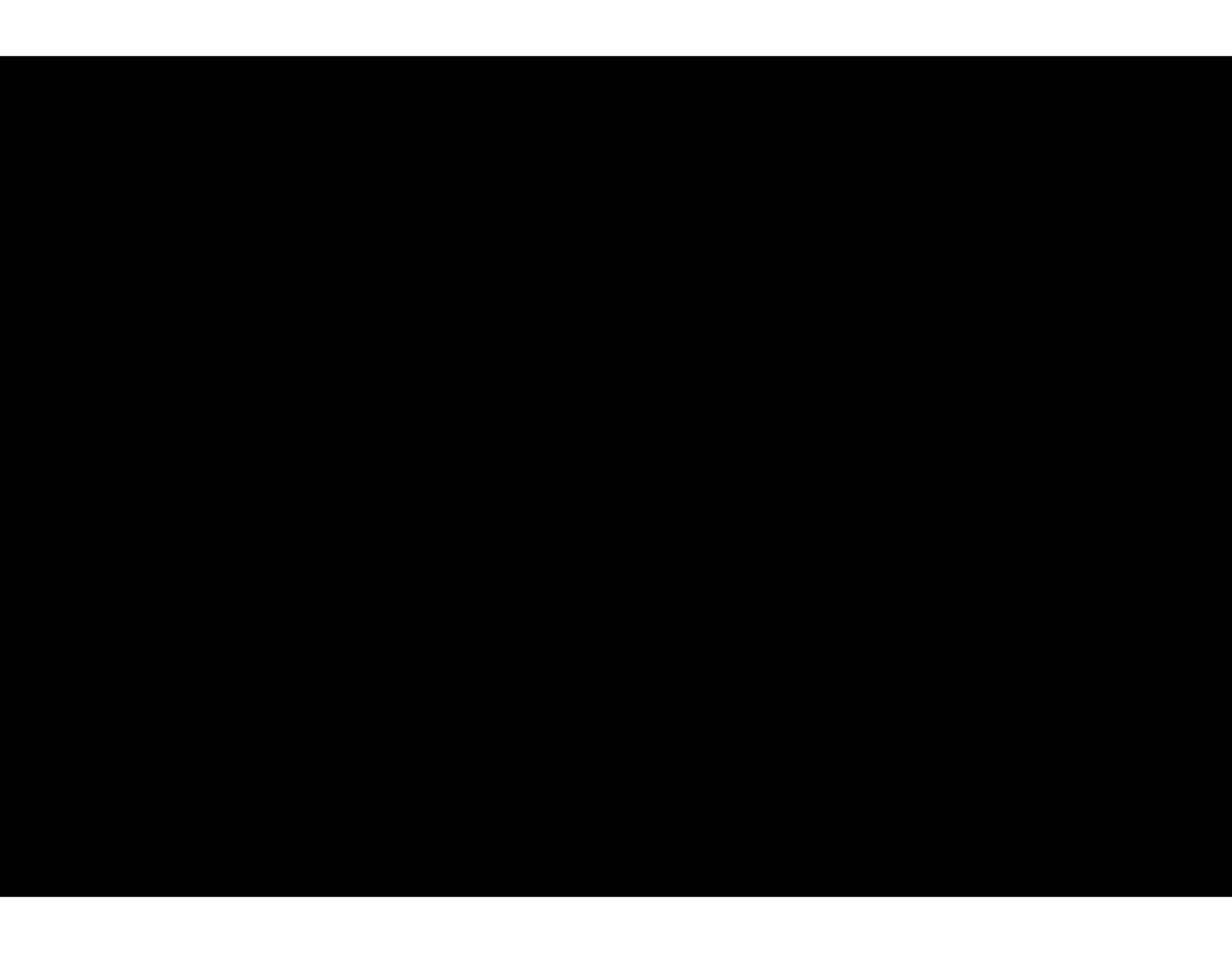
# Improving Peer Review

- Adopt the best model
- Provide access to training materials: online, workshops
- Provide detailed guidelines, checklists, reviewer forms to guide review
- Select reviewers carefully

# Peer Review

## As a mentoring tool

- Mentor trainee by reading manuscript before submission, providing comments
- Mentor trainee in writing:  
peer review mirrors scientific writing
- Guide trainee in critical review of a manuscript



# Guidelines for Authors

- Aims and scope
- Types of manuscripts and other features
- Formatting requirements
- Ethical policies
- Peer review, editorial, and publication processes
- Fees
- Detailed and accessible: online and/or in print



# Guidelines for Authors

## Aims and Scope

- Sometimes includes a mission statement
  - What is your goal?
  - Who are the readers you wish to reach?
  - Generalists? Specialists?
- Topics
- Broad or narrow scope

# Guidelines for Authors

## Types of manuscripts and other features

- Original research

Is supplemental material (data, videos) permitted?

- Case reports
- Brief communications
- Review articles (narrative and systematic)
- Other features (invited or unsolicited):

Editorials, letters to the editor, commentaries

Book reviews, special features, new

Errata

# Guidelines for Authors

## Specify for each article type:

- Organization (e.g., Title Page, Abstract, Key Words, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion)
- Word counts and number of references
- Format and file types for text, tables and figures, captions
- Reporting guidelines: Which ones? Required or recommended?
- Style: language, abbreviations, units, references and citations

# Guidelines for Authors

## Ethical policies

- Original unpublished work
  - State whether you check for plagiarism using programs such as iThenticate/Cross Check
- Authorship requirements: many journals cite ICMJE
  - Author contributions to the work
- Copyright
- Conflicts of interest, disclosures
- Animal care and use, client consent, human subjects
  - Cite required guidelines
  - Institutional approval for study

# Guidelines for Authors

## Include descriptions of:

- Peer-review process
- Editorial workflow
  - What can authors expect as their manuscript moves from submission to review to decision?
- Publication process
  - What happens after the manuscript is accepted?
  - Will the editor ask for additional revisions?
  - When will proofs be received?
  - When will the article be published?
  - What post-production services are available?

# Guidelines for Authors

## Best practice:

- Provide detailed and accessible guidelines
- Online and/or in print

## Challenges:

- Do authors read the guidelines?
- Do authors follow them?
- What is your enforcement policy?

# Reporting Guidelines and Checklists



Enhancing the **QUALITY** and  
**Transparency Of health Research**



EQUATOR resources in  
[Portuguese](#) | [Spanish](#)

[Home](#) [Library](#) [Toolkits](#) [Courses & events](#) [News](#) [Blog](#) [Librarian Network](#) [About us](#) [Contact](#)

Your one-stop-shop for writing and publishing high-impact health research

[find reporting guidelines](#) | [improve your writing](#) | [join our courses](#) | [run your own training course](#) | [enhance your peer review](#) | [implement guidelines](#)



## Library for health research reporting

The Library contains a comprehensive searchable database of reporting guidelines and also links to other resources relevant to research reporting.



[Search for reporting guidelines](#)



[Not sure which reporting guideline to use?](#)



[Reporting guidelines under development](#)



[Visit the library for more resources](#)



## Reporting guidelines for main study types

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

[See all 377 reporting guidelines](#)

## The EQUATOR Oncology Project



Resources supporting complete, accurate and transparent research

[Visit the EQUATOR Oncology Project](#)



# Purpose of Reporting Guidelines

- Improve reliability and value of published health research by:
  - Promoting transparent and accurate reporting
  - Wider use of robust reporting guidelines
- The EQUATOR Network provides an extensive list of guidelines
  - With accompanying checklists and flowcharts

# Background

- Research intended to advance scientific knowledge and improve detection, treatment, and prevention of disease **MUST** be published  
Otherwise, it's as if the study was never done
- Published studies should include enough data to allow readers to evaluate the information, reach their own conclusions, and repeat the study
- Research must be reliable!

# Background

- Reporting guidelines:
  - Provide minimal batch of items required for clarity and transparency
  - What was done?
  - What bias might be present?
- Evidence-based reporting
- Essential to assess reliability of the study

# Editors of Veterinary Journals

## BMC Veterinary Research

HOME

ABOUT

ARTICLES

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

RESEARCH ARTICLE | OPEN ACCESS

### A survey of the awareness, knowledge, policies and views of veterinary journal Editors-in-Chief on reporting guidelines for publication of research

[Douglas JC Grindlay](#)  , [Rachel S Dean](#), [Mary M Christopher](#) and [Marnie L Brennan](#)

*BMC Veterinary Research* 2014 10:10 | <https://doi.org/10.1186/1746-6148-10-10> |

© Grindlay et al.; licensee BioMed Central Ltd. 2014

Received: 5 August 2013 | Accepted: 26 November 2013 | Published: 10 January 2014

# Editors of Veterinary Journals

Thirty-six of 68 editors (52.9%) stated they **knew what a reporting guideline was** before receiving the questionnaire.

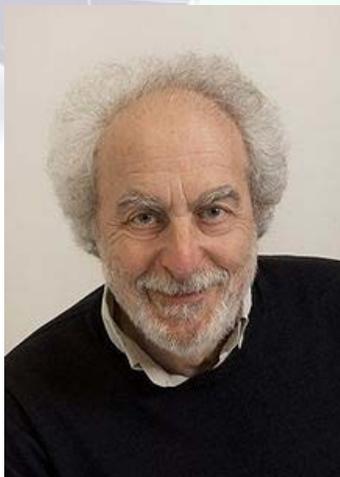
Twenty of 57 respondents (35.1%) said **their journal referred to reporting guidelines** in its instructions to authors.

Forty-four of 68 respondents (68.2%) believed that **reporting guidelines should be adopted by all refereed veterinary journals.**

# The importance of clarity, transparency, and accuracy in research publications

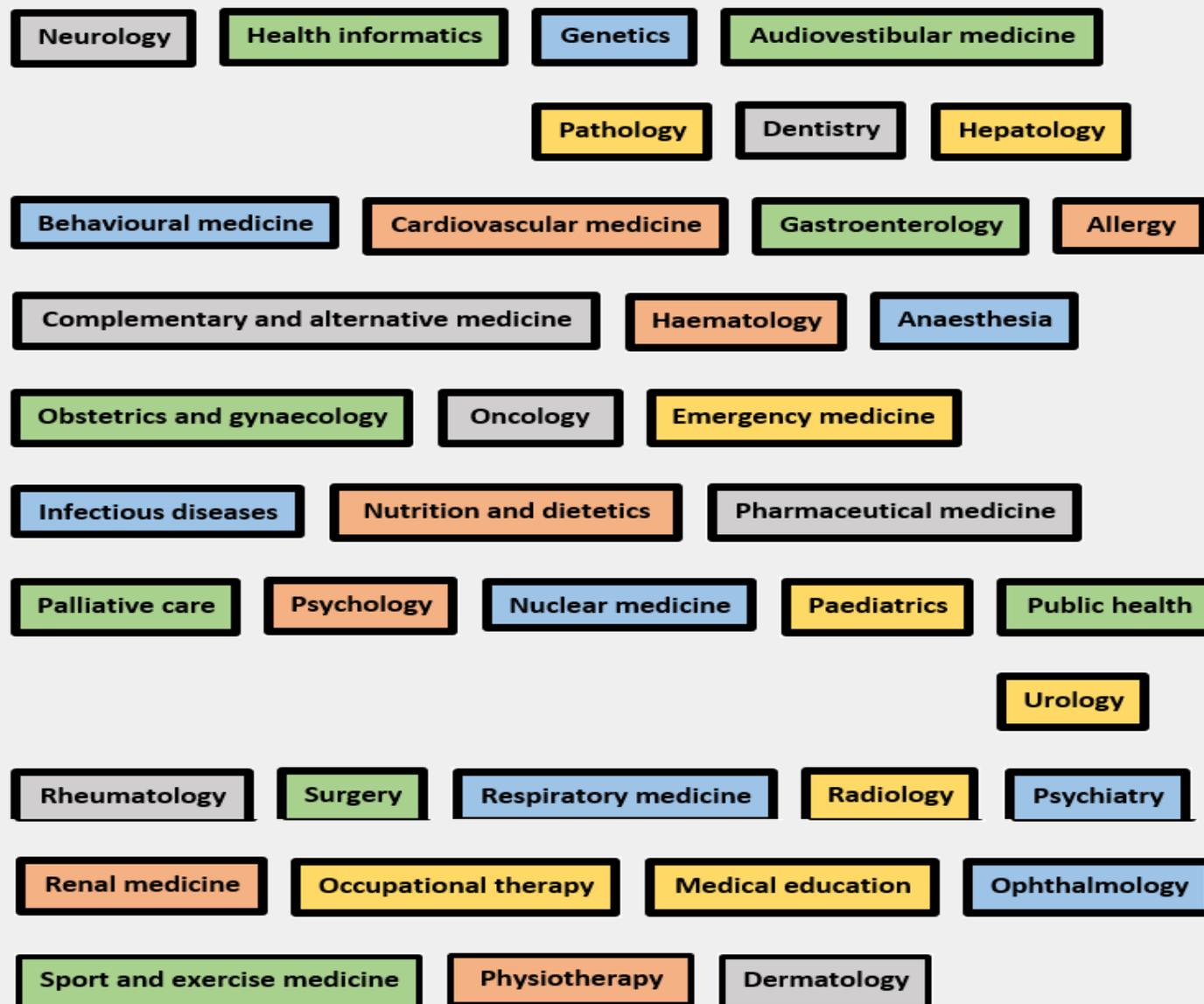
**Doug Altman**

*Centre for Statistics in Medicine, Oxford, UK  
and EQUATOR Network*



## Browse reporting guidelines by specialty

The specialties listed below are those for which there are specialty-specific reporting guidelines available. If your specialty is not listed please visit the [main reporting guidelines search page](#).





## Reporting guidelines for main study types

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



## **The REFLECT statement: methods and processes of creating reporting guidelines for randomized controlled trials for livestock and food safety by modifying the CONSORT statement**

**Reporting guideline provided for?  
(i.e. exactly what the authors state in the paper)**

Reporting randomised controlled trials for livestock and food safety

Paper section and topic	Item	Descriptor of REFLECT statement item	Reported on Page #
Title & Abstract	1	How <b>study units</b> were allocated to interventions ( eg, "random allocation," "randomized," or "randomly assigned"). <b>Clearly state whether the outcome was the result of natural exposure or was the result of a deliberate agent challenge.</b>	
Introduction Background	2	Scientific background and explanation of rationale.	
Methods Participants	3	Eligibility criteria <b>for owner/managers and study units at each level of the organizational structure</b> , and the settings and locations where the data were collected.	
Interventions	4	Precise details of the interventions intended for each group, <b>the level at which the intervention was allocated</b> , and how and when interventions were actually administered.	
	4b	<b>Precise details of the agent and the challenge model, if a challenge study design was used.</b>	
Objectives	5	Specific objectives and hypotheses. <b>Clearly state primary and secondary objectives (if applicable).</b>	
Outcomes	6	Clearly defined primary and secondary outcome measures and the levels at which they were measured, and, when applicable, any methods used to enhance the quality of measurements (eg, multiple observations, training of assessors).	
Sample size	7	How sample size was determined and, when applicable, explanation of any interim analyses and stopping rules. <b>Sample-size considerations should include sample-size determinations at each level of the organizational structure and the assumptions used to account for any non-independence among groups or individuals within a group.</b>	
Randomization -- Sequence generation	8	Method used to generate the random allocation sequence <b>at the relevant level of the organizational structure</b> , including details of any restrictions (eg, blocking, stratification)	
Randomization -- Allocation concealment	9	Method used to implement the random allocation sequence <b>at the relevant level of the organizational structure</b> , (eg, numbered containers <del>or central telephone</del> ), clarifying whether the sequence was concealed until interventions were assigned.	

**Basic Statistical Reporting for  
Articles Published in Biomedical Journals:  
The “Statistical Analyses and Methods  
in the Published Literature” or  
The SAMPL Guidelines”**

**Thomas A. Lang<sup>a</sup> and Douglas G. Altman<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> Principal, Tom Lang Communications and Training International

<sup>b</sup> Director, Centre for Statistics in Medicine, Oxford University



## **The CARE Guidelines: Consensus-based Clinical Case Reporting Guideline Development**

**Reporting guideline provided for?  
(i.e. exactly what the authors state in the paper)**

For completeness, transparency and data analysis in case reports and data from the point of care.

[CARE checklist \(PDF\)](#) - 2016 Update

## 2013 CARE Checklist

1. **Title** – The area of focus and “case report” should appear in the title
2. **Key Words** – Two to five key words that identify topics in this case report
3. **Abstract** – (structure or unstructured)
  - a. Introduction – What is unique and why is it important?
  - b. The patient’s main concerns and important clinical findings.
  - c. The main diagnoses, interventions, and outcomes.
  - d. Conclusion—What are one or more “take-away” lessons?
4. **Introduction** – Briefly summarize why this case is unique with medical literature references.
5. **Patient Information**
  - a. De-identified demographic and other patient information.
  - b. Main concerns and symptoms of the patient.
  - c. Medical, family, and psychosocial history including genetic information.
  - d. Relevant past interventions and their outcomes.
6. **Clinical Findings** – Relevant physical examination (PE) and other clinical findings.
7. **Timeline** – Relevant data from this episode of care organized as a timeline (figure or table).
8. **Diagnostic Assessment**
  - a. Diagnostic methods (PE, laboratory testing, imaging, surveys).
  - b. Diagnostic challenges.
  - c. Diagnostic reasoning including differential diagnosis.
  - d. Prognostic characteristics when applicable.

## 9. **Therapeutic Intervention**

- a. Types of intervention (pharmacologic, surgical, preventive).
- b. Administration of intervention (dosage, strength, duration).
- c. Changes in the interventions with explanations.

## 10. **Follow-up and Outcomes**

- a. Clinician and patient-assessed outcomes when appropriate.
- b. Important follow-up diagnostic and other test results.
- c. Intervention adherence and tolerability (how was this assessed)?
- d. Adverse and unanticipated events.

## 11. **Discussion**

- a. Strengths and limitations in your approach to this case.
- b. Discussion of the relevant medical literature.
- c. The rationale for your conclusions.
- d. The primary “take-away” lessons from this case report.

12. **Patient Perspective** – The patient can share their perspective on their case.

13. **Informed Consent** – The patient should give informed consent.

Visit “Downloads” to find translations of the CARE Checklist and other tools in the CARE toolkit

## Downloads

The CARE toolkit was designed to increase the accuracy and transparency of evidence from the point of care that that it can inform clinical research, clinical practice guidelines, and medical education. This toolkit contains the CARE checklist and Writing Templates in multiple languages, Timeline Writing Instructions and Timeline Examples in English and CARE extensions. CARE extensions from specialty groups with whom we have collaborated are available on this site as well. These tools are available to improve the completeness, transparency, and usefulness of case reports for clinicians, researchers, educators, and patients.

## Writing Template

Chinese

Dutch

English

French

German

Japanese

Korean

Portuguese

Spanish

Russian

# Resources: The EQUATOR Network

- Guidelines for editors
  - Journal needs
  - Policy: endorse? recommend? require?
  - Launching your new policy
- Selecting the appropriate guideline
- Teaching research skills
- Writing research: how to write a great paper using reporting guidelines
- Extensive library with translations of guidelines in some languages

The EQUATOR wizard: a new tool to help authors find the right reporting guideline

# Reporting Guidelines: Challenges

- How to enforce?
- Will requirements discourage submissions?
- Authors need to be educated:  
editorials, conferences, workshops?
- Will “checklist” format prevent authors from telling a story?
- Burden on editorial staff, reviewers, statisticians

# Response to Challenges

- *Guidelines*, not requirements
- The “checklist” helps authors include all the necessary items in the manuscript, but does not dictate how the story is told
  - No need to write the manuscript as a checklist
- Importantly, reporting guidelines do NOT guarantee the study is of high quality
- Growing concerns about flawed research – in methodology and/or reporting
  - ★ *Methodological quality must precede reporting*
  - ★ *But high-quality studies must be reported accurately and completely*

<https://wame.blog/>



# News and Views

*for medical journal editors*

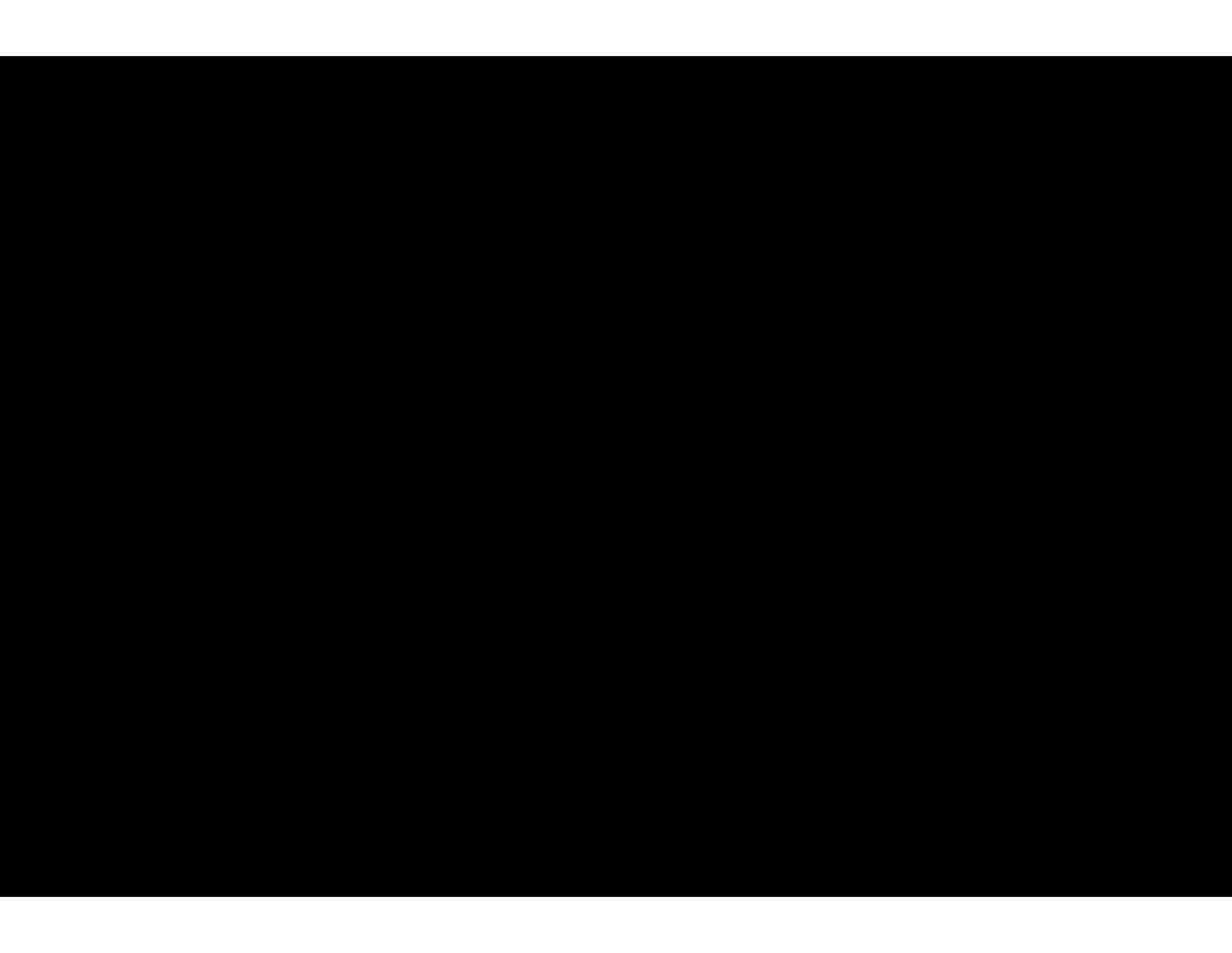
[About](#)

[Contact](#)



## Implementing Reporting Guidelines: Why and How, for Journal Editors

*Margaret Winker, MD*



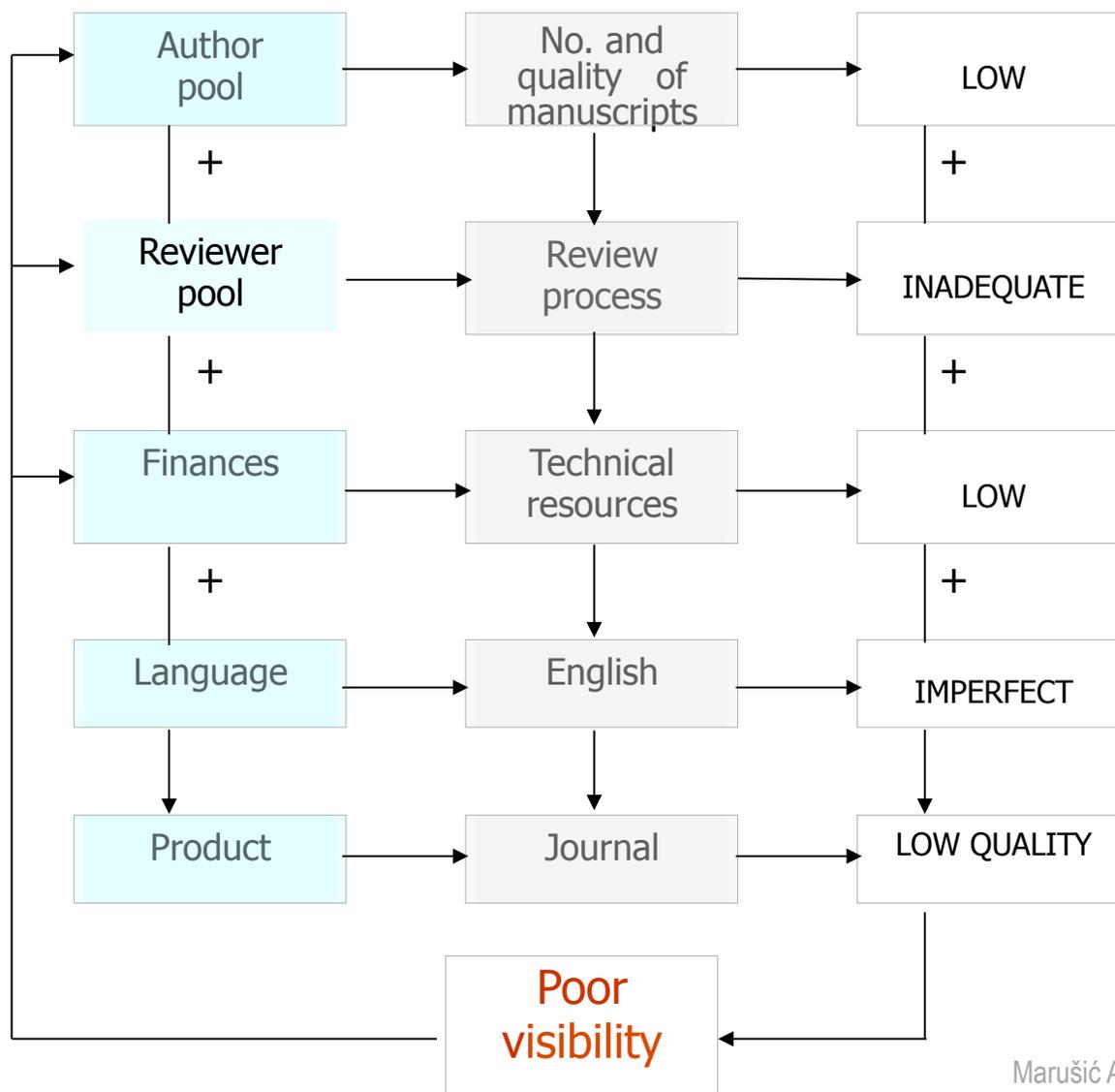
# Building your journal



# Small journals have unique challenges

- An academic or scholarly journal where the Editor-in-Chief is not a full-time position
- Represents a small scientific community
  - A small research community
  - Lack of financial support
  - Language barrier
- But... they often have an important defining role in their community

# Small journals: the vicious cycle

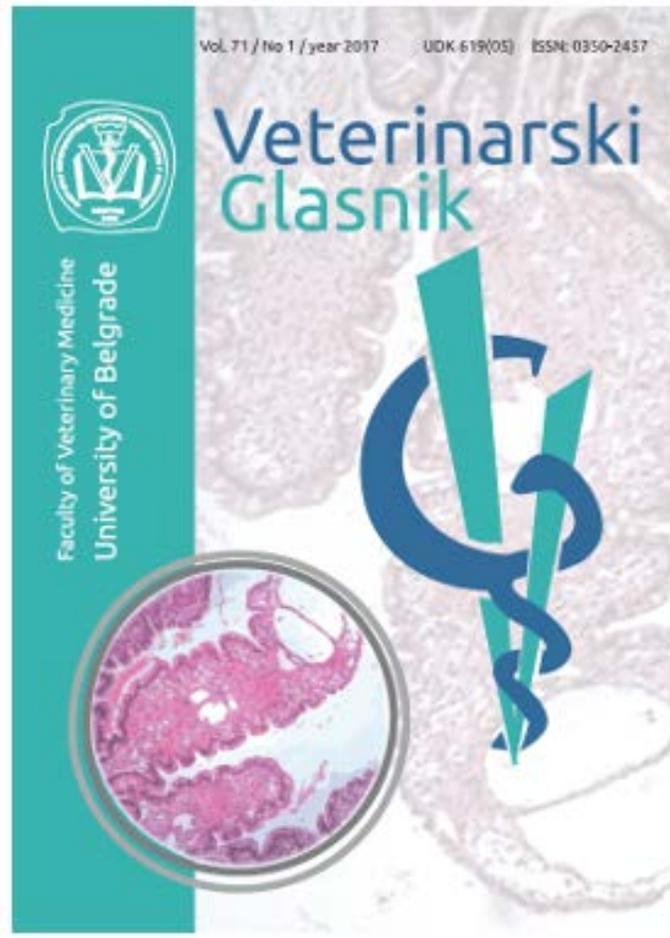


# Breaking the cycle: building your journal

- Scientific quality
- Editorial quality
- Production quality
- Visibility and access



# Define your publishing niche



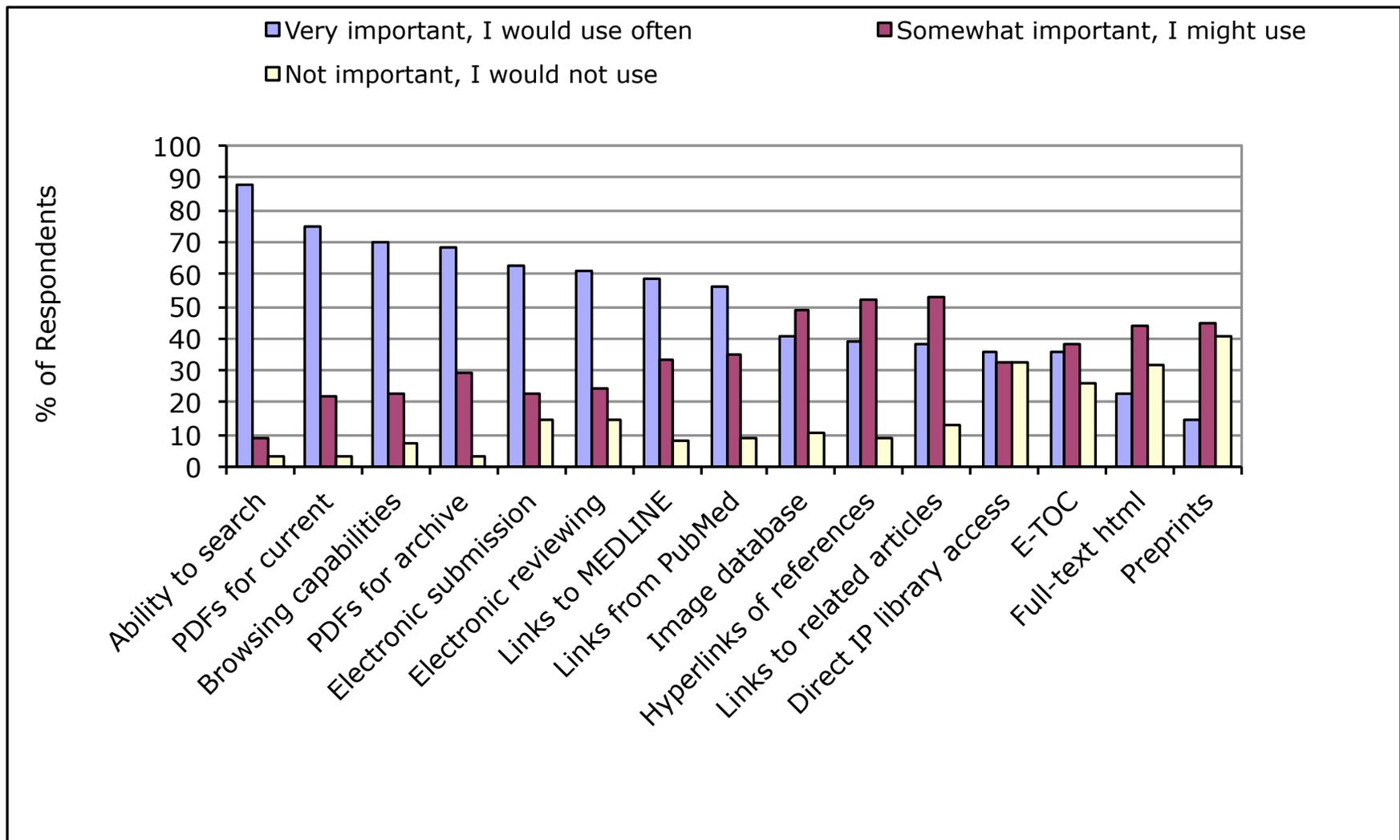
- What is your journal's purpose and mission?
- What subjects and types of articles do you publish?
- Who is your target audience?
- With what organization(s) is the journal affiliated?

# Get feedback from your stakeholders

- Who are the stakeholders?
- What do they expect from the journal?
- What is important to authors, reviewers, editors, readers?



# E-journal survey – *Vet Clin Pathol*



# SWOT analysis of your journal

**S**TRENGTHS

**W**EAKNESSES



Internal resources  
and capabilities

**O**PPORTUNITIES

**T**HREATS



Factors external to  
the organization or  
group

# SWOT analysis of your journal

**S**TRENGTHS

**W**EAKNESSES

**O**PPORTUNITIES

**T**HREATS

In small journals, the weaknesses and external threats to the job outweigh the strengths and opportunities provided by the global editorial community

# Scientific quality

- Increase the number and quality of submissions
  - Annual call for papers
  - Editorial board contributions
  - Solicit invited reviews
  - Consensus/policy papers
  - Solicit good conference papers
  - Develop theme issues



Call for  
Papers

# Increase number and quality of submissions



- Offer authors a positive publishing experience (what is important to your authors?)
  - Short time to publication
  - Timely communication
  - Clear rationale for decisions
  - Quality technical services
- Enhanced article visibility
  - Editorials and letters
  - Social media, marketing, article-level metrics
- Best paper awards

# Increase the quality of peer reviews

- Problems with peer review
  - Inconsistent, slow, expensive, subjective, biased, open to abuse, poor at identifying errors, cannot be taught, small pool
- Who makes the best reviewers?
  - Under 40, good institution, known to the editors
- What would improve the quality of reviewers?
  - Reward/credit/acknowledgment, careful selection, training, structured format, greater accountability



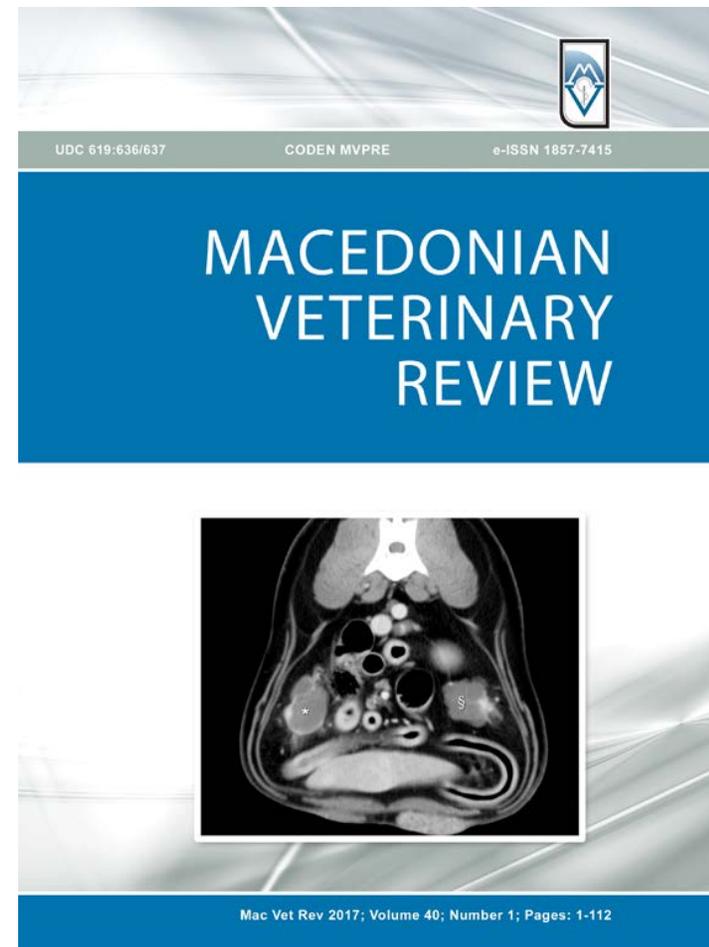
# Editorial quality

- What are the main editorial problems with manuscripts?
  - Failure to follow Guidelines for Authors
  - Poorly organized or written
  - Tables and figures
  - Accuracy of references
- Where is editorial quality addressed in the manuscript workflow?
- Editor training, acknowledgment, reward



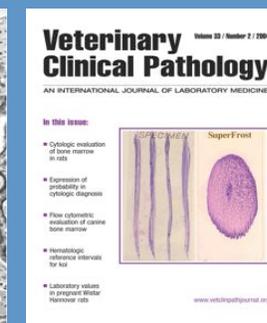
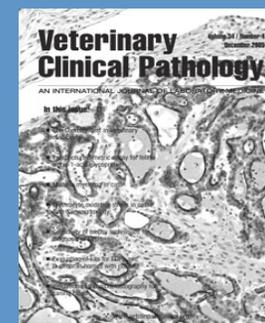
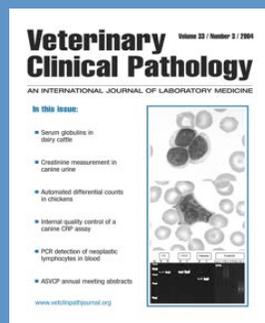
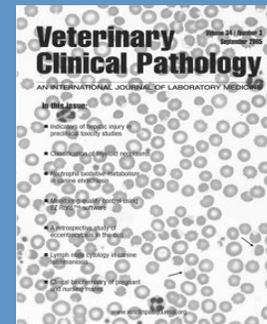
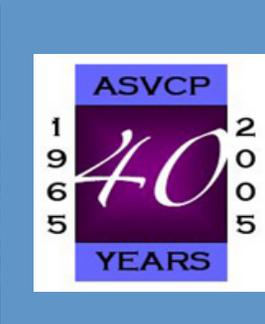
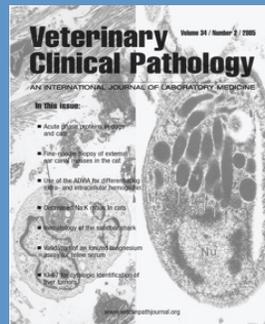
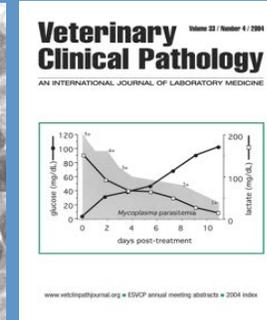
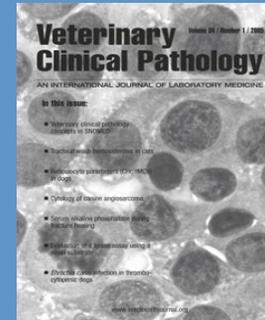
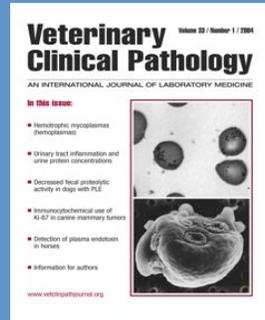
# Production and technical quality

- Develop a business plan
  - Financial, organizational
  - Benchmarking
- Regular publication schedule
  - Reliable source of content
- Language services
- Technical services
  - Print and website



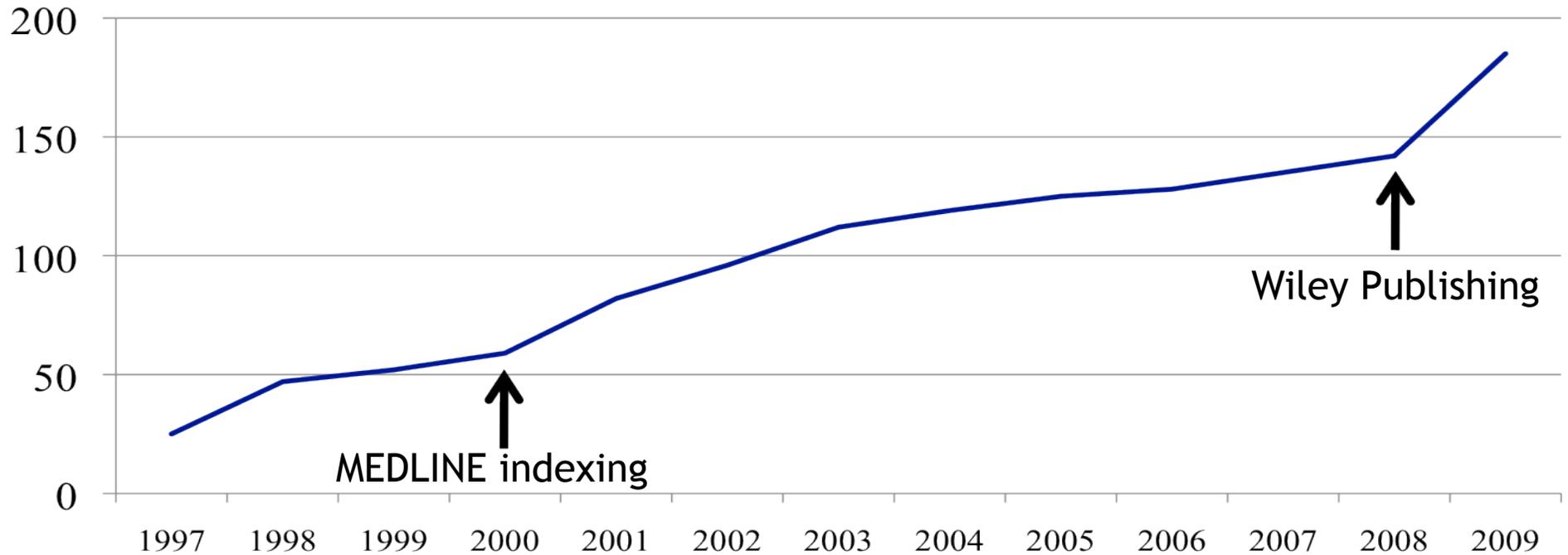
# Visibility and access

- Who is your target audience?
- Subscriptions
- Open access
- Indexing
- Marketing
- Advocate for your journal



# How indexing and a change in publisher affected submissions at *Vet Clin Pathol*

Submissions (est.)



# SWOT analysis of your journal

## STRENGTHS

What advantages do you have?

What do you do well?

What are your resources?

What do other people see as your strengths?

## WEAKNESSES

What could you improve?

What do you do badly?

What should you avoid?

## OPPORTUNITIES

What opportunities do you see?

What interesting trends are you aware of?

Are there changes in your environment?

## THREATS

What obstacles do you face?

What is your “competition” doing?

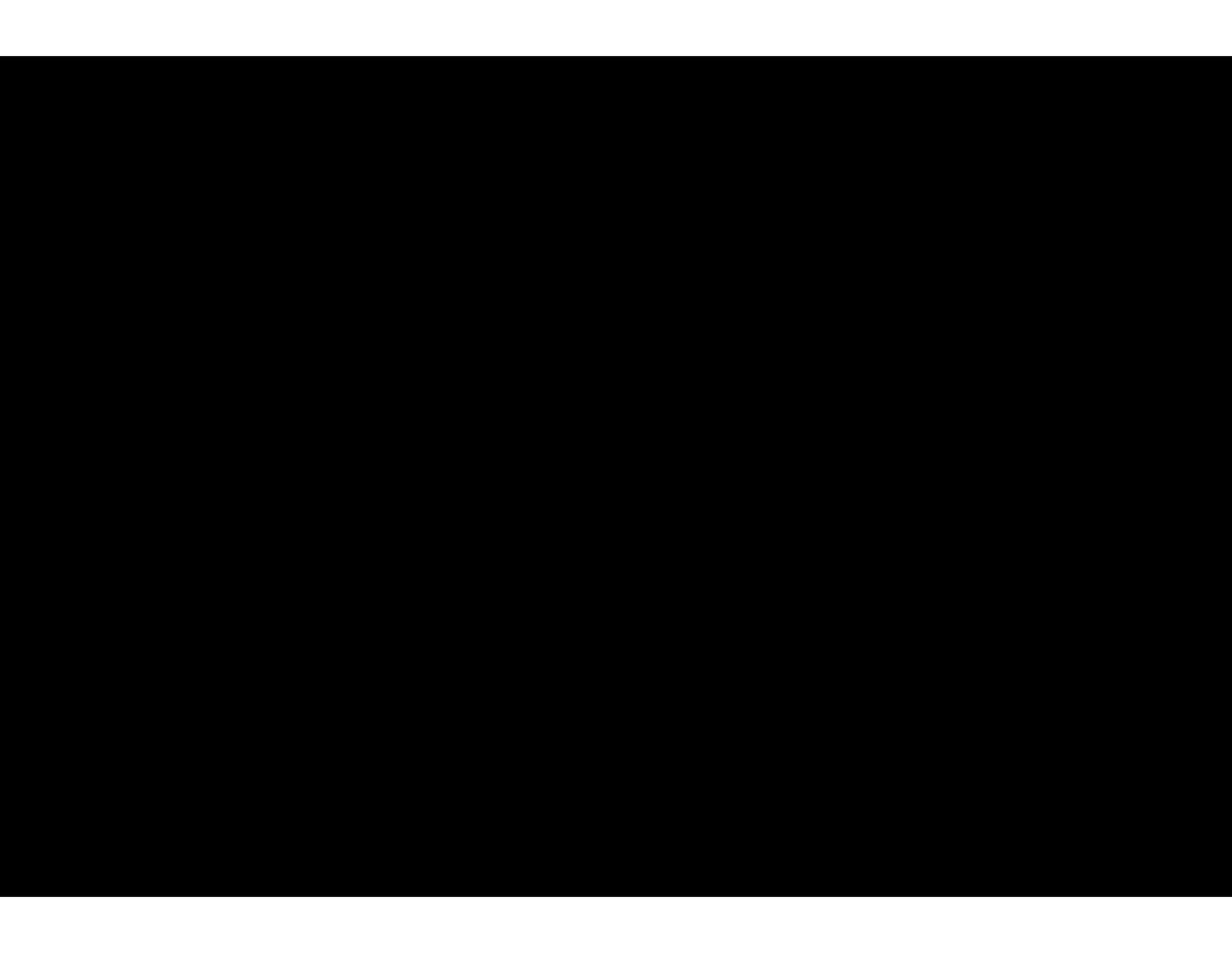
Are the expectations for your journal changing?

Do you have financial problems?

# Building your journal

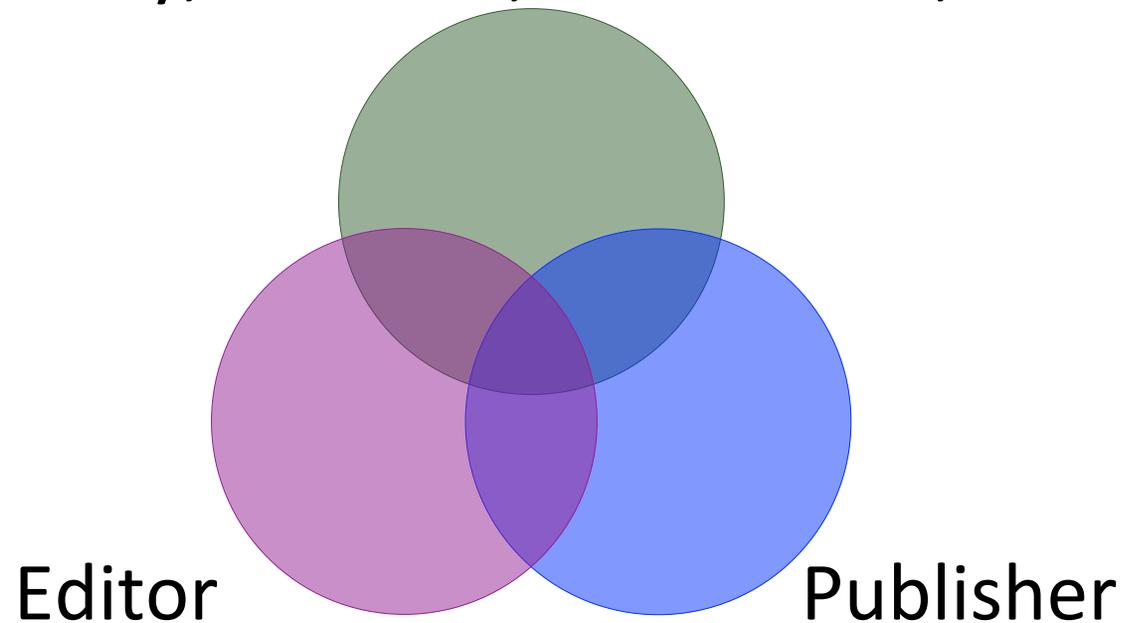
- Define your niche
- Query your stakeholders
- Develop a strategic plan, with benchmarks
  - Scientific quality
  - Editorial quality
  - Production/technical quality
  - Visibility and access





# Working with the Society/University/ Owner/Publisher

The Organization  
(University, Institute, Association, Society)



*The Journal is often the face of the organization*

# The Organization

Responsible to and for core mission and values of the University, Institution, Society, or Association

Fiduciary responsibilities in implementation of mission

# The Editor-in-Chief

Has authority, responsibility, and accountability for editorial content

Provides leadership in implementing a vision that advances the mission

Defines

- Scope of work
- Integrity and quality of processes established to identify and evaluate content
- Integrity and quality of content published in the journal

# Editorial Independence

- Editors declined to publish article from a senior colleague at the Zagreb Medical School because the authors refused to address criticisms from the reviewers.
- Other incidents involving plagiarism and retractions created great conflict between the editors and the journal's owners, 4 medical schools in Croatia.
- In 2011, editors resigned after a decade-long struggle.



# Editorial Independence

“The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) adopts the World Association of Medical Editors’ definition. According to this definition, **editorial freedom, or independence, is the concept that editors-in-chief have full authority over the editorial content of their journal and the timing of publication of that content.** Journal owners should not interfere in the evaluation, selection, or editing of individual articles either directly or by creating an environment that strongly influences decisions. Journal owners should not require editors to publish supplements as part of their contractual agreements.

# Editorial Independence

Editors should base decisions on the **validity of the work and its importance to the journal's readers**, not on the commercial success of the journal. Editors should be **free to express critical but responsible views** about all aspects of medicine without fear of retribution, even if these views conflict with the commercial goals of the publisher. Editors and editors' organizations are obligated to support the concept of editorial freedom and to draw major transgressions of such freedom to the attention of the international medical, academic, and lay communities.”

# Editorial Independence

Full authority over editorial content of the journal...

Includes:

- Publication model: subscription-based, open access, hybrid
- Editorial staffing
- Selection, evaluation, formatting, and timing of content
- Final decisions

...in the absence of political or commercial influence

# Ensuring Editorial Independence

Public statement from organization on editorial independence and disclaimer that content does not represent the opinion of the organization (or publisher)

Formal contract....or informal understanding

# Public Statement

The American Society for Veterinary Clinical Pathology (ASVCP) recognizes and fully accepts the need for editorial independence of the Society's journal, *Veterinary Clinical Pathology*, and grants the editor-in-chief full authority over the editorial content of the journal, including the type, selection, format, and timing of content for publication. For these purposes, editorial content is understood to include research articles, other types of scientific reports, special reports and consensus statements, editorials, letters to the editor, features, news, and advertising. Opinions and statements expressed in *Veterinary Clinical Pathology* are those of the contributors and, unless so stated, do not represent the official policy of the ASVCP. ASVCP management does not interfere in the evaluation, selection, or editing of content published in the journal, either directly or by establishing an environment that has an impact on decisions of the editor-in-chief.

*Approved by the ASVCP Executive Board August 2012*

# Formal contract.... or informal understanding

- Job description, including authority and responsibilities of editor
- Term of appointment and renewal option
- Reporting structure
- Mechanisms for resolving conflict
- Compensation (source creates no conflict of interest)
- Support: Office, travel

# Authority and Responsibilities of Editor

- Journal mission statement
- Priorities and objectives
- Measures of journal success
- Written editorial policies
- Subeditors, editorial board, assistants appointed by and report to editor
- Support (funding and staff) that enables success
- Direct communication between editor and highest level of organization (or oversight group)

# Decisions

Based on validity and importance of work

- Input from subeditors/editorial board, readers, advisors
- Free of political, commercial, or personal influence
- Free of fear of retribution for publishing critical or competing work or opinions counter to those of the organization or its strategic plan
- Authority to resist pressure from organization, prominent members, authors, or reviewers, and authors ...
- Right to view and refuse advertisements

# The Organization and the Editor

Functional relationship founded on mutual respect and trust

- The organization should neither micromanage nor ignore the journal
- The organization should have deliberate processes for changing editors
- Editor should disclose conflicts of interest – scientific, commercial, personal
- Editor should maintain confidentiality regarding manuscripts, authors, reviews

# The Organization

## Financial management

- Compensation to editor and subeditors
- Office support, software
- Travel to conferences
  - Visibility of journal
  - Networking with other editors, authors
- Support development of editor
  - Training, science editing conferences, workshops
- Financial reporting to editor
  - At least annually

# Questions to consider

Keeping in mind that a functional relationship is founded on mutual respect and trust...

- What is the relationship between your organization and the journal?
  - Do you have a contract with a job description and terms of appointment?
  - Are you evaluated? By what process?
- Has your organization issued a public statement acknowledging your editorial independence?

# Questions to consider

- Do you have editorial independence in all matters of editorial content and staffing?
- Does the journal's impact factor – or other metrics – play a role in the organization's oversight of the journal?
- Is financial support sufficient to fulfill journal's mission?

# The Organization and the Editor

Functional relationship is founded on mutual respect and trust.

COPE Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors:

- Define relationship explicitly in writing and establish mechanism(s) to resolve conflict(s)
- Establish regular communication