AuthorAID in the Eastern Mediterranean (AAEM)

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What is AuthorAID?

A concept:

To support health by supporting the publication and availability of important information
What is AuthorAID?

A goal:

To improve research and publication practices, and to level the publication playing field so all important information becomes available.
What is AuthorAID?

A practical outcome:

A consortium of projects with different sources of support but common goals
What do AuthorAID projects do?

- Find author’s editors to help authors write manuscripts in English and get them published

- Provide training for authors and journal editors
AAEM Co-coordinators

Dr. Farhad Handjani, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (SUMS)
AAEM resources:

1. Volunteer author’s editors (face-to-face, email)
2. Guidelines for authors and editors
3. Training in writing and publication skills
Authors’ editors:

1. Help researchers improve their manuscripts to satisfy readers’ expectations for **language**, **content** and **organization**

2. Do not write the first draft or rewrite text for the authors

3. Are contributors named in the Acknowledgements, but not authors named in the byline
Authors’ editors:
4. Are often but not always native speakers of English
5. Can be specialists in science, in writing, or both
6. Want researchers to publish successfully and learn good writing skills
- Manuscripts edited face-to-face or via email
- Track changes and clean files
- Pre-peer review queries about content
- Help with Instructions for Authors
- Information on the Inet
Guidelines for authors and editors:

1. Abbreviations
2. References
3. Plagiarism/Appropriate citation
4. Secondary publication
5. Choosing the right journal
Workshop topics:
1. Manuscript writing and editing
2. Good publication ethics for authors and editors
3. Journal quality, technical editing and copyediting
4. Online resources for journal editors
5. Bilingual and multilingual publication


http://publicationethics.org/newsletters

2010 – AAEM accepted as a member of COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics)

http://publicationethics.org.uk
AuthorAID is the name given to a growing number of web-based activities that provide developmental editing assistance to scientists and researchers from developing countries who wish to prepare scientific articles for publication in peer reviewed journals. Phyllis Freeman[1] and Anthony Robbins,[2] co-editors of the Journal of Public Health Policy (JPHP),[3] first suggested the name and concept in 2004 and published “Closing the 'publishing gap' between rich and poor” about AuthorAID on the Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net) [4] in 2005 [5].

Ready to write?

When you write the manuscript, ask yourself **who needs to know what you found.**

Before you finish the manuscript, identify the journals most likely to accept it.
To reach the **right readers**

An optimal match between your work and the journal’s mission

(Guyatt and Haynes, 2006)

Where will the article be seen by the greatest number of most interested readers?
To make a good first impression

- Invest time to compare journals.
- Write specifically for the journal.
- Follow the Instructions for Authors or Guidelines for Manuscript Preparation carefully. Details are as important as content.
- Title page, abstract, references
Emphasis on research methodology and reporting

- Follow the CONSORT and EQUATOR reporting checklists for different study designs

http://www.consort-statement.org/consort-statement/
http://www.equator-network.org
A **title** that reflects the contents
What subjects? What population?
What conditions? Where?
What setting (local, national, regional, international)?
Experimental or observational?
When?
Title

Emphasis on the hypothesis, the method, or the results?
Should the title state the conclusion?
Consult examples in your target journal.
An abstract that reflects the contents

Re-revise the abstract after the main manuscript is completely finished.

No discrepancies in the information in the abstract, main text, and tables or figures for: terminology, sample size, population size, numerical data
An **Introduction** that attracts attention and identifies the target population of readers
- Interesting first sentence
- Identify the problem or gap in knowledge.
- State your proposed solution.
- Say how you tested your solution.
Methods

- No secret ingredients
- Reproducibility
- Traceability of materials (apparatus, reagents, cell lines, antibodies, etc.)
- Compliance with ethics guidelines
**Results** that focus on the question asked in the Introduction

**Figures and tables** that focus on the question asked, and the data that help readers answer it for themselves

**No repetition** of data among text, tables and figures
A Discussion that explains what your findings mean

Answer the question you asked in the Introduction.
A **Discussion** that is critical of your own study

- Identify the limitations.
- Explain to what extent the conclusions can be generalized.
- Suggest new studies that could help answer questions that require more data.
Should the **Discussion** begin with a summary of the results?

It depends on the discipline and the editor’s preference. **Check your target journal.**

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For any questions, **ask the Editor** before you submit the manuscript.
1. A simple and boring text is better than a complex, “interesting” text that is hard to understand.
2. Revise, correct and rewrite.

It is normal for a good article to be rewritten many times before it is clear enough for readers to understand easily.
- Language and usage
  Grammar and syntax
  Specialized terminology and usage

- Content and writing
  Organization and logical flow
  Rhetoric and persuasiveness

- Journal’s instructions
3. Ask a specific question. Provide a specific answer.

Your statement of purpose (at the end of the Introduction) is the anchor for the whole article.
4. Refer to your **statement of purpose** often while writing and revising, to stay focused on the aim of the study and the new, original, key results.
5. What do your results mean for other researchers?

Eliminate discussion and references that are not related to the aim of the study.

Wikimedia Commons
6. Relate the conclusions explicitly to the aim of the study.

Wikimedia Commons
Research publication ethics

Articles are rejected or retracted for ethical deficiencies in authorship, originality, accurate citation, conflict of interest and local ethics committee approval.

http://retractionwatch.wordpress.com
http://www.icmje.org/
http://www.wame.org/
Ethical and legal concerns have proliferated among editors of journals. As a result the number of documents and assurances that editors require from authors about the ethical conduct of research is increasing.
Noncompliance with these ethical requirements can lead to rejection of a submitted manuscript or retraction of a published article. Noncompliance may be unintentional or intentional, i.e., with the intent to deceive or mislead.
Is cut-and-paste a good solution for writing problems?

Wikimedia Commons
Don’t copy and paste from other articles. The English may not be very good.

Many articles in an unreadable writing style are published even in top journals.

Vasconcelos SMR. Writing up research in English: Choice or necessity? Rev Col Bras Cir 2007; 34:1-2
Research publication ethics

Good writing and good referencing (correct citation of sources) go together.

The readers want some background but also want to know what your original, expert analysis and conclusions are.
Research publication ethics

“Although the two papers were not exactly identical, there were overlaps between the two papers, and more importantly, the authors have failed to mention the existence of a closely related paper, using the same cohort of patients, and being submitted to another journal.”
Research publication ethics

“We do not say whether this was intentional or simply due to a misunderstanding of our journal’s policy, but the fact that the authors have failed to report (either to us or to the chief editor of Respiratory Medicine)…”
Research publication ethics

“of this almost concomitant submission of two very closely related papers was real and undisputable.”


Accessed 1 January 2011
How to improve citation accuracy and avoid plagiarism?

1. Avoid copy-and-paste.
2. Write or revise all the text yourself.
3. Insert provisional references (author-year) in the first draft.
4. Paraphrase (1 or 2 lines).
5. Always use “quotation marks” to enclose verbatim quotations (1 or 2 lines), and provide the reference.
Guidelines on how to improve citation accuracy and avoid plagiarism


Thank-you very much for your participation.

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