

## Common reasons why manuscripts are rejected: Advice for young investigators



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**W**e want you to succeed! We need gifted researchers to help uncover important mechanisms of disease, introduce innovative therapy, and carry the specialty forward to help us reduce the burden of skin disorders. Appropriate vetting of new information is critical to the success of these endeavors, and reviewers generously donate their time to improve the quality of manuscripts and ensure that our journals feature valid and relevant articles destined to improve patient care. When I embark upon a review, I truly hope the article will be a gem, and I share the author's disappointment when an article is rejected. A few common themes account for most decisions to reject, and attention to these in the planning stage can increase the chance of success.

- Wrong journal. Original and well-executed research will be rejected if it is of limited relevance to the core readers of the journal. Choose wisely when you decide where to submit your work, and begin by asking yourself what audience would find your manuscript most useful. The core readers of our journal are

practicing dermatologists looking for ways to improve patient outcomes.

- Lack of clinical relevance. Ask yourself if the average reader of the journal would find the manuscript useful.
- Lack of originality. Research the question carefully to determine what has already been published. Give credit where it is due and ask yourself if your study could result in a meaningful advancement in science or a change in practice.
- Rambling discussions. You do not have to include everything known about the topic. Our readers have told us that they value concise articles. Longer is not better. Present your findings as efficiently as possible, using tables and graphs where appropriate. Focus on what your study adds to existing knowledge and the impact on clinical practice.
- Unjustified use of superlatives. Terms like “rapid and dramatic response” and my personal favorite “robust methodology” often have little meaning and are best avoided. To paraphrase the great Detective Sergeant Joe Friday, “Just the facts, ma’am.”

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