

EDITORIAL

What the *American Journal of Ophthalmology* Wants to Publish



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CONCEPTUALIZING A STUDY, DOING THE RESEARCH, and pulling the study together are certainly the most labor-intensive parts of getting a paper published, but finding the perfect home for that study can be equally challenging and important. And since our knowledge of pathophysiology improves and new treatments become available, the period between conducting a study and publication is a critical one, determining primacy in publication of that idea and a study's ultimate exposure in the media at large. You should have already read the *Author Information* at AJO.com regarding composition and formatting of your manuscript, and you may think that your clinical investigation, observation, or laboratory investigation seems right for the *Journal*, but you may still be uncertain regarding the manuscript's fit. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that *American Journal of Ophthalmology* is the right place to submit your work.

To aid in your writing, submission, and reviewing processes, we have prepared the following 6 questions that the AJO Editorial Board addresses when determining if a full-length article is appropriate for the *Journal*:

- (1) Does the submission provide novel information to confirm or refute our current understanding of a condition that affects the visual system?
- (2) Does it provide new insight on the pathophysiology of an ophthalmic condition?
- (3) Does the submission improve our diagnostic acumen?
- (4) Does it inform our decision-making process?
- (5) Armed with the new information, could we better determine treatment outcomes?
- (6) Do the authors provide a strategy that could potentially affect care for large groups of patients or how resources could be more effectively directed to their care?

When at least 1 of these questions has been answered affirmatively, all of the following points must also be satisfied:

- (1) Are the conclusions supported by the analyses and results? Are possible alternative explanations for the results considered, as appropriate?
- (2) Are the statistical analyses appropriate for the type of data and sample size?
- (3) In the Discussion section, are the results compared and contrasted with those in other relevant publications? Are discordant results acknowledged and explored, with appropriate explanations provided, whenever possible?
- (4) Is the degree of certainty with which the conclusions are stated appropriate based on the study design, sample size, analyses, results, and existing literature?

Next, it is important to format your research article according to the *Author Information*, which contains the most recent style practices for the *Journal*. Adhering to style ensures a smooth reviewing process by streamlining the presentation of your text for the reviewers and editors, as well as decreasing the postacceptance timeline by minimizing the need for extensive copyediting and typesetting. Conversely, nonadherence to the *Journal's* style practices constitute one of the most common reasons for early rejection. As a reminder for those authors writing in other than their native language, text should be re-reviewed by an English-language medical editor to guarantee clarity and publication quality of the message.

Appropriate statistical analysis is a critical component of modern research manuscripts, and inadequate or incorrect conclusions based on faulty application of statistics are frequent reasons for rejection. Whereas descriptive statistics and simpler probability analyses may be adequately performed by many clinicians, more detailed analyses may require input from trained statisticians.

Other types of articles, such as Editorials, Perspectives, and Meta-analyses, have more specific considerations. Editorials are subjective interpretations, analyses, or reflections on clinical, scientific, and socioeconomic issues within ophthalmology. Perspectives integrate the opinion and experience of their authors with evidence supporting

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the use of current techniques, procedures, therapies, or clinical approaches. Prospective editorial and perspective writers should inquire by e-mail prior to submission as to the *Journal's* need for and interest in their topic.

Finally, while the *Journal* no longer requires preapproval for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses, the standards for these articles are precise and exacting in accordance with guidelines from the Cochrane organization. Whereas meta-analyses may be favorably reviewed if the authors are able to support new and important

conclusions, systematic reviews are infrequently published and may be better suited for other journals. Detailed information is contained in a recent editorial by Virgili and associates.¹

REFERENCE

1. Virgili G, Parrish RK II. Preparing a Systematic Review for the American Journal of Ophthalmology. *Am J Ophthalmol* 2017; 182:xii–xiv.