

Editorial

The trials and tribulations of publishing!

We publish several types of articles in this journal: opinion pieces, commentaries, good practice statements, literature reviews, and of course, original research in the form of clinical papers.

The most commonly submitted articles are literature reviews and clinical papers. It is important for readers to be aware that these pieces have undergone rigorous peer review. The type of paper is denoted above the title, and where appropriate, further information may be provided at the end. For example, in the case of POGP good practice statements, readers are advised that, although these are written by experienced clinicians and informed by evidence-based research, the statements do not constitute legal documents.

The guidelines published by bodies such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy take into consideration potential legal liabilities for the clinician, the authors and the overarching professional bodies. This is why the production of these recommendations must undergo an even more rigorous and time-consuming review than that involved in publishing an academic paper. For more information, readers are referred to the ADAPTE process (The ADAPTE Collaboration 2009).

The peer-review process

The editorial team will initially read all submitted work to ensure that it is within the scope of this journal. If so, it is then entered into peer review. We have a dedicated team of reviewers who take this work on as a voluntary role and give their time freely. We thank these experts in the field for their work and dedication.

At *JPOGP*, we practise double-blind peer review. This means that the article will be anonymized before it is sent to the reviewers, and the authors will not know who has assessed their work. We feel that this is important in order to prevent bias. In some publications, the review is open, and both the authors and reviewers are named. The argument for this is that it promotes transparency, and this is not without merit.

After review, it is common in the first instance for most papers to receive “reject but may re-submit after rewriting” or “accept with revision”

ratings. This is usual practice in academic publishing, although most authors will tell you that it is far more common to receive an outright rejection – a thick skin is vital in academia!

At *JPOGP*, we pride ourselves on conducting our reviews in a way that we feel is encouraging to new authors, and supports them through the process. Authors will probably tell you that it can still be a harrowing time: it may feel as if strangers are criticizing your hard work – and indeed, your baby!

It may take several revisions and rounds of assessment for the authors and reviewers to agree on the final version. The result of peer review is that your research will be more robust, easier to read and in a form that is more useful in terms of the readers’ knowledge base.

After acceptance, Andrew Wilson, our professional editor, will begin the process of copy-editing. Here the real fun begins: this stage involves much more than checking spelling and grammar. Andrew ensures that the paper follows the standards of academic publishing (e.g. the correct use of SI units), is internally consistent, and that all assertions are supported by relevant references. He also endeavours to make certain that the text flows smoothly in as plain English as possible, cuts superfluous material and adds relevant text, as necessary. Tables and boxes must also be formatted according to our house style.

We are fortunate to have this facility at *JPOGP* because numerous higher-impact journals do not, and many will tell you how frustrating it is when one cannot find a reference because it has been published inaccurately.

Despite the extra work and often-painful process, most authors will agree that the published article is ultimately a far better piece, and seeing it in print is worth all the hard work and tears.

Why bother?

So why do peer review? Well, it is important to note that not everything we read will have undergone any sort of review at all. Because of the Internet and social media, there is increasing opportunity for authors to publish whatever they wish. There is a good argument to support this too: science is often moving at a pace that undermines the traditional process, and by the

time an article has been properly published, the field has moved on.

However, this type of publishing relies on the most important part of the review process: you the reader. It is vital that we continue to evaluate, no matter where or how the piece has been published. We owe it to ourselves and to our patients to read everything with a critical eye. It is not sufficient to assume that all we read is based on strong evidence just because it has been published in print. This is particularly vital given the plethora of information constantly being published online (e.g. on Twitter). It is not unusual now for information to gain credence because of the amount of retweets, and the number of countries in which that information has been shared with the touch of a thumb.

Does information that has been talked about and shared via Twitter and other forms of social

media hold the same robust standing as a multisite randomized controlled trial that has been carried out in several countries? In fact, it may well be that information shared by Twitter is more useful because it is a representation of current thoughts and ideas. Nonetheless, it must be read and critiqued before the information it contains is accepted as factual.

For any publication, you, the reader and the ultimate reviewer, must decide on its merit.

Gillian Campbell & Biljana Kennaway

Reference

ADAPTE Collaboration, The (2009) *Guideline Adaptation: A Resource Toolkit*. [WWW document.] URL <https://g-i-n.net/document-store/working-groups-documents/adaptation/adapte-resource-toolkit-guideline-adaptation-2-0.pdf>

Copy deadlines

Copy for the Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021 editions of the journal (Nos 127 and 128) must be submitted to the editor by **14 March 2020** and **14 October 2020**, respectively. Please note that academic and clinical articles must be received well before the deadline since time must be allowed so that these can be peer-reviewed. Manuscripts should be presented double-spaced with a wide margin, and adhere to the author's guidelines found on pp. 76–78 and on the POGP website (<http://pogp.csp.org.uk/documents/acpwh-journal-writing-guidelines>). Articles for consideration should be sent to Dr Gillian Campbell, Ashbourne Physiotherapy and Sports Injuries Centre, 1 Spire House, Waterside Business Park, Ashbourne DE6 1DG, UK.