

# CHAPTER 1

## A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

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*The task of the improver of mankind is not to preach morality, but to alter the inner self of mankind by transforming the external conditions for its moral health.*

Edith Södergran (1984)

To be perplexed is to be puzzled or even confused by the intricacy of a situation. One way to deal with perplexing situations is to find a guide who can provide advice, information, and direction. Many such guides have risen to the occasion throughout the ages, providing useful knowledge for the perplexed students of literature, religion, philosophy and science. One of the most influential philosophical treatises, for example, was Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*. In a time of religious, moral, and political change, Maimonides (1135-1204) sought to harmonize Greco-Roman, Christian, Jewish, and Arabic thought into a philosophical guide for those who seek meaning in life. In a sense, *Publishing Addiction Science* is intended to be a similar (albeit less ambitious!) guide for those of us who from time to time are perplexed about how to find our way through the complex world of addiction science. The chapters in this book constitute a journey to the practical, scientific, moral, and even philosophical destinations with which we must become acquainted if we are to succeed, either as temporary visitors to the field or as career scientists dedicating our lives to the study of addiction.

It is our contention, and a guiding theme of the book, that the key to successful publishing in addiction science is to understand not only how to write a scientific article and where to publish it, but also how to do these things honestly and ethically. So in addition to the practical business of publishing scientific papers in both disciplinary and addiction specialty journals, the ultimate goal of this book is to enhance scientific integrity in the publication process, giving special consideration to the main organ of scientific communication, the scholarly journal.

### WHAT IS A JOURNAL?

According to Lafollette (1992, p. 69), "a journal is a periodical that an identifiable intellectual community regards as a primary channel of communication of knowledge in its field and as one of the arbitrators of the authenticity or legitimacy of that knowledge." Journals establish intellectual standards, provide a forum of communication among scientists, bring valuable information to the public, set the agenda for a field of study, provide an historical record of a particular area of knowledge, and confer implicit certification on authors for the authenticity and originality of their work (Lafollette 1992). In addition, they have the potential to serve the interests of career advancement and personal reward for scholarly achievement.

Journals are joint enterprises typically managed through a division of labour among owners, publishers, editors, reviewers, and authors. How this cast of characters is organized into an integrated set of players varies from one journal to another. The owners of a journal can be non-profit organizations (such as learned societies, universities or professional organizations), government agencies, or private publishers. The publishers of a journal range from small printers to large-scale multinational organizations that distribute and often own hundreds of journals. Journal editors tend to be appointed by the owners, society officers, or publishers. Editors of some of the larger scientific and medical journals are paid for their services and have full-time staff at their disposal. Editors of smaller journals are generally unpaid, and have a small editorial staff with some volunteer assistant editors. Reviewers are usually established investigators who have specialized knowledge of the subject matter. They provide critical and typically anonymous evaluations of manuscripts written by their peers without remuneration as a service to the field.

Without journals, addiction science would have a limited audience and a short half-life; therefore, if an addiction scientist wishes to search for truth and benefit humankind, he or she must understand the inner workings and current complexities of the journal publication process.

## **PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE**

The addiction field has grown tremendously in the past twenty-five years, and addiction publishing has been no exception. Currently there are eighty-eight journals publishing in eighteen languages that are devoted primarily to the dissemination of scholarly information about addiction and related health problems, and many more journals that publish addiction science as part of their broader mission. Despite the growing amount of published material and the increasing opportunities for publication, there exists no guide designed to inform prospective authors about the opportunities, requirements, and challenges of publishing addiction science. Moreover, the addiction field has become perhaps one of the first areas of science where interdisciplinary collaboration between biomedical and psychosocial researchers is essential to progress (see Edwards 2002). As investigators begin to identify as much with addiction studies as they do with their own professional disciplines, it is important to have a publishing guide that looks at the field as an inter-related whole rather than as a collection of separate disciplines.

The primary purpose of *Publishing Addiction Science* is therefore to advise potential authors of articles in the addiction field of the opportunities for publishing their work in scholarly journals, with emphasis on addiction specialty journals. Although all prospective authors will find such a guide useful, it should be particularly helpful to students, younger investigators, clinicians, and professional researchers. The book's broader purpose is to improve the quality of scientific publishing in the addiction field by educating authors about the kinds of ethical and professional issues with which the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE) has long been concerned: scientific misconduct, ethical decision-making, the publication process, and the difficulties experienced by authors whose first language is not English.

## GUIDE TO THE GUIDE

*Publishing Addiction Science* is organized into three sections. The first section covers general issues of how and where to publish. The initial overview chapter (Chapter 2) deals with how to choose a journal, a very important decision in the publication process. The chapter describes the range of journals that publish articles related to addiction and psychoactive substances, summarizes the growth in addiction journals, including the move into open-access journals and on-line subscriptions, and explains eight steps to choosing a journal. Related to this chapter, the ISAJE-sponsored PARINT Web site (Publishing Addiction Research Internationally, located at <http://www.parint.org>) contains a database of practical information about nearly ninety addiction specialty journals (e.g., mission statement, website, editor, publisher, submission procedures, etc.). It is designed to assist authors with the selection of an appropriate journal. The next chapter in this section ("Beyond the Anglo-American World: Advice for Researchers from Developing or Non-English-Speaking Countries") describes the practical and professional issues addiction scientists face in countries that are less resourced or where English is not the main language, how authors who come from these countries can improve their chances of publishing in English-language journals, the possibilities for authors to publish in both English and an additional language so they can communicate to different audiences, and how to decide whether an article may better serve the public by being published in the author's mother tongue. Finally, Chapter 4 ("Getting Started: Publication Issues for Graduate Students, Postdoctoral Fellows, and other Novice Addiction Scientists") describes the challenges and rewards of publishing early in one's professional career, including authorship issues, timetables, ethical dilemmas, and the pressure to publish.

The second section provides a detailed guide to the practical side of addiction publishing. Chapter 5 ("How to Write a Scientific Research Paper for a Peer-reviewed Journal") describes the development of a typical data-based research article from the planning stage to the completion of the final draft, emphasizing scientific writing techniques, the structure of a scientific article, and effective methods of scientific communication. The following chapter ("How to Write Publishable Qualitative Research") explores the differences and commonalities between qualitative and quantitative research, identifies the hallmarks of exemplary qualitative research, and offers practical advice not only for writing a qualitative article but also for getting it published. Chapter 7 ("Use and Abuse of Citations") describes appropriate and less appropriate citation practices with recommendations for good behaviour, and gives a critical appraisal of citation indexes, particularly the Journal Impact Factor, which is used to evaluate the importance attributed to different journals. Chapter 8 ("Coin of the Realm: Practical Procedures for Determining Authorship") deals with the often vexing question of how to assign authorship credits in multi-authored articles. We offer practical recommendations to provide collaborating authors with a process that is open, fair, and ethical. Chapter 9 ("Preparing Manuscripts and Responding to Reviewers' Reports: Inside the Editorial Black Box") focuses on how to negotiate the peer review process. It describes how the process works and how journal editors make decisions about publishing an article.

It also considers editors' criteria for selecting papers, and explains how to revise a paper when an editor asks for a response to the reviewers' comments. The final chapter in this section ("Reviewing Manuscripts for Addiction Journals: An Application of the Golden Rule") covers the peer review process, what journal editors expect from reviewers, and how to prepare a constructive critical review.

The third section of *Publishing Addiction Science* is devoted to ethical issues. The first article in this section (Chapter 11, "Dante's Inferno: Seven Deadly Sins in Scientific Publishing and How to Avoid Them") reviews seven types of scientific misconduct in the context of a broader definition of scientific integrity. The seven 'sins' are carelessness in citing and reviewing the literature, redundant publication, failure to declare a conflict of interest, unfair authorship, failure to conform to minimal standards of protection for animal or human subjects, plagiarism, and scientific fraud. We discuss each of these ethical improprieties in terms of its relative importance and possible consequences, and suggest procedures for avoiding them. Chapter 12 ("The Road to Paradise: Moral Reasoning in Addiction Publishing") discusses the same issues in the context of a framework for making ethical decisions. We use case studies to illustrate the seven ethical topics, with a commentary on each case that demonstrates a practical approach to making sound decisions. Chapter 13 ("Relationships with the Alcoholic Beverage Industry, Pharmaceutical Companies, and Other Funding Agencies: Holy Grail or Poisoned Chalice?") reviews recent trends in the funding of addiction research and the ethical risks involved in accepting funding from industry as well as non-industry sources.

In the book's concluding chapter (Chapter 14: "Addiction Publishing and the Meaning of (Scientific) Life"), the editors describe the pursuit of scientific integrity as a journey worth taking, as much for the joy of honest discovery as for the achievement of fame and fortune.

## **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE EFFECTIVELY**

Chapters 2 through 10 have been written to stand alone and can be read independently of each other. Chapter 11 is closely linked to Chapter 12, the former presenting the most common ethical problems in addiction publishing and the latter giving fictitious examples modeled on real cases with instructions on how to analyze and resolve important ethical dilemmas. Both are relevant to the issues discussed in Chapter 13 on the potential influence of funding sources.

The authors have collectively striven to present practical advice as well as 'best practices'. In most cases, such as resolving authorship disputes or ethical problems, the solutions are not always simple or obvious, but rather depend on the situation and on an open dialogue among colleagues in the research milieu. For these cases, we offer advice on how to use effective problem-solving techniques that will allow the reader to develop skills that can be applied to a variety of situations. The authors would like to emphasize that no addiction researcher, however experienced in the game of science, can argue that she or he has all the right answers. This book is best seen as providing a basis for discussions about concrete problems in various research environments.

The chapters are also meant for use as background readings for lectures and workshops and a new on-line tutorial (available at <http://www.parint.org>). The authors of this book developed the tutorial with the support of the US National Institute on Drug Abuse. It has been expanded with support from the US National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Recognizing that there are important institutional responsibilities in the ethical conduct of addiction research, we hope that this book will also inspire research institutions to develop guidelines and policies that support the ethical practices considered in these chapters. Although we have sub-titled the book as a *Guide for the Perplexed*, we would point out that its chapters will be helpful as well to those who believe they have all the answers, including professional organizations and scientific institutions.

## REFERENCES

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