

INTRODUCTION: 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 that we must become acquainted with if we are to be successful, 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 not only to understand 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 usually manage the journal with the assistance of a small editorial staff and a group of 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. If the goal of an addiction scientist is to benefit humankind and search for truth, then the journal publication process needs to be understood in terms of its origins, inner workings and current complexities.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The addiction field has grown tremendously in the past 25 years, and addiction publishing has been no exception. Currently there are 74 journals in 18 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, especially addiction specialty journals. Although all prospective authors will find such a guide useful, it should be particularly helpful for students, younger investigators, clinicians and professional researchers.

A 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 that the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE) has been concerning itself with: scientific misconduct; ethical decision-making; the publication process; editorial decision-making; 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 deals with general issues of how and where to publish. An initial overview (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, and explains eight steps to choose a journal. Related to this chapter, the book's Appendix A contains practical information about 75 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 paper in this section (Chapter 3: Reaching Parnassus: Advice on How to Get Published for Researchers from Developing or Non-English Speaking Countries) describes the practical and professional issues that are faced by addiction scientists in countries which 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.

The second section provides a detailed guide to the practical side of addiction publishing. The initial article (Chapter 4: To Cite or Not to Cite: 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, and particularly of the Impact Factor, which is used to evaluate the importance attributed to different journals. The next chapter (Chapter 5: 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. Practical recommendations are suggested to provide collaborating authors with a process that is open, fair and ethical. The final chapter in this section (Chapter 6: Preparing Manuscripts and Responding to Referees' 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 how to revise a paper when an editor asks for a response to the reviewers' comments.

The third section is devoted to ethical issues. The first article in this section (Chapter 7: 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 finally, scientific fraud. Each of these ethical improprieties is discussed in terms of its relative importance and possible consequences, and procedures are suggested for avoiding them.

The following chapter (Chapter 8: The Road to Paradise: Moral Reasoning in Addiction Publishing) discusses the same issues in the context of a framework for ethical decision-making. Case studies are used to illustrate the seven ethical topics, with a commentary on each case provided to demonstrate a practical approach to making sound decisions. In the book's concluding chapter (Chapter 9: 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 6 have been written to stand alone and can be read independently. Chapter 7 is closely linked to Chapter 8; 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.

The authors of these chapters have 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 are often dependent 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 so that skills can be acquired and 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 the right answers. This book can therefore be used as 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 at universities and in research departments. A set of training materials has been developed by the authors with the support of the World Health Organization and other sponsors. Information about training activities and future editions of the book can be found on ISAJE's website www.isaje.net.

Finally, this guide can be viewed as a reference book where the individual researcher can compare his or her position on a problem or issue with the views of some experienced editors.

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.

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