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Editorial

The life-cycle of your manuscript: From submission to publication



A B S T R A C T

Though the basics of peer review are common knowledge in the scientific community, to many authors the publication process is mystifying, frustrating, and often confusing. The purpose of this editorial is to lift the curtain between authors and editors and provide insight into the actual life-cycle of a manuscript from submission to publication, including practical tips regarding editorial processes, explanations of the most common reasons for rejection and advice on how to avoid it. While the detail is specific to the editorial setup at JBMT, it aims to provide useful insight to all authors seeking publication in a scientific journal, and to function as a teaching tool for educators guiding their students towards publication.

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1. Introduction: On a personal note

The essence of this somewhat lengthy editorial is best summarised in a personal – true – story. It is my duty and privilege to work closely with authors at all stages of manuscript preparation. Most JBMT authors and readers will by now be aware that this journal endured some difficulties due to the loss of our founding Editor-in-Chief Leon Chaitow – my father – in late 2018. With his direct guidance despite his declining health, I worked alongside the editorial team he put in place to ensure the continuity of JBMT. It is no small irony that this endeavour to continue to serve the fields of allied and integrated health was impacted by the fragility of the human frame that we all share.

I recently found myself working on a complex manuscript requiring a number of modifications on several levels. The authors were primarily clinicians, and the content was ground-breaking, but the write-up needed a lot of work to meet acceptable scientific standards. There were times that I would ask for yet more revisions, but was always impressed to receive the corresponding author's warm thanks for my recommendations, with which they always complied. Eventually the manuscript was accepted and I assisted the author through the final stages of production. Despite feeling that I had really pushed the author, once the manuscript was accepted, they wrote to request my mailing address. A few days later I received a small package with a beautiful card in which the author had written a story they remembered about my father. It brought tears to my eyes, but it also warmed my heart and sits on my desk as I write. It was not so much the story of my father that moved me, as the generous gesture of thanks that acknowledged my efforts. I really worked this author hard, yet they rose magnificently to the challenge. Their gesture showed that they recognised the hours that I too, had put in.

I have many such stories to tell, and the authors come from around the world. There was an author from Iran, who sent me

Persian poetry to help me in the early days following the loss of my father. There is the team from Portugal, whose professionalism and commitment left me open-mouthed. And there are the dozens of authors who have endured the turbulence with patience and understanding as we transitioned to a new editorial team, entirely committed to serving JBMT and its mission.

Unlike many journals, JBMT is committed to supporting authors not necessarily trained in the finer points of scientific writing, when the premise of their work is sound, and we seek to actively encourage clinical and early-career researchers, as noted in Dr Cambron's recent editorial (Cambron, 2019). Nevertheless, many journals reject on the basis of an imperfect write-up or problematic language alone. We are proud to have committed to supporting, rather than rejecting authors on this basis, despite the increased workload that it entails, and stories such as the one above demonstrate how rewarding it can be on a personal level. However, it is also extremely time-consuming, and unfortunately many authors are not aware of the actual process that a manuscript goes through to reach publication even when sailing is smooth, or of the immense number of hours that editors and reviewers must put in to every single manuscript. Though the peer review process is widely known in the scientific community, it is all too easy to think that "it can't seriously take that long to review a paper;" or to feel irate in the face of a rejection that takes nine months to issue. As seasoned authors ourselves, we know too well the frustration of excruciatingly slow processes, unexplained rejections, and pedantic, or downright mystifying reviews. However, experience has taught us that this goes with the territory of all academic publishing, and the reasons for these phenomena are often complex.

From the perspective of many authors, the publication process is rife with insult upon injury. You have already toiled for months to conduct research and prepare your manuscript, and it is frankly ridiculous for it to take several more months only to be issued with a perfunctory rejection, or reviews requesting minor revisions

that cannot have taken reviewers more than an hour to write (n.b. yes, but they had to read your paper first ...)

To the less experienced author, this is a crisis: the conferral of their qualification often depends on publication, and surely it cannot take that long to read and evaluate a single paper! What on earth are those editors doing? “What is wrong with my paper?” you think, and after what seems like forever, you email to ask.

At JBMT, as at most journals, we frequently receive inquiries regarding manuscript status, or querying why a manuscript appears to be “stuck” at a given point in the process. Whenever I receive such a query, I sympathise with the author, knowing that even experienced authors are not privy to the editorial workflow, much of which takes place outside the editorial platform, so the actual status on the online system does not correspond to reality. If I do not reply, they will keep emailing, ever more insistently, until I do. The automated response explaining our procedures and updating authors on any technical reasons for delay, too often goes unread. When I do reply, I lose valuable time from processing papers, and time spent answering such queries will usually lead to a fresh set of queries the next day – for papers I could have processed if I had ignored the emails.

The purpose of this editorial is to open the door to our editorial offices and provide some insight into the actual life-cycle of a manuscript from submission to publication, through the actual steps that we take for each and every one. There are many pre-submission steps that authors can take to ensure that their manuscript is processed faster, but there is very little that editors can do if they are not followed – except expend more time on them.

2. A day in the life of a managing editor

At JBMT we typically receive 10–20 submissions weekly, and it is the task of the managing editor to evaluate these before they are forwarded for review. Different journals work in different ways, but this is the procedure followed by this editorial team.

2.1. Initial evaluation

When faced with a set of new submissions, the first task is to skim all of the titles and abstracts to check that they match the scope of the journal, and that the authors do not already have another paper in consideration with the us. This policy is due to the high volume of submissions we receive, and aims to ensure fair distribution of resources.

The second task is to read through each paper individually to decide which are review-ready and can proceed, which must be returned to authors for minor revision prior to review, and which will not proceed to review. The Managing Editor performs all of these evaluations in chronological order of receipt. What are known as “desk rejections” occur at this stage, for the reasons outlined in [Table 1](#) below:

The minimum time spent evaluating each manuscript is around 30–40 minutes for close reading, using the plagiarism-checker, and ensuring that all required elements are present. This takes considerably longer if investigation is required, and if editing and examples are needed in the response. In keeping with our policy to support early-career and international authors we show leniency if the overall impression is that the manuscript can be considered for review with modifications. However, authors should be aware that most journals normally reject immediately if any of the above points occur, and do not offer the opportunity for resubmission. Therefore, a key reason for our slower processing times is due to the individual attention given to each author.

2.2. After initial evaluation

There are three possible outcomes after initial evaluation: desk-rejection; return to author for amendments; accept for review.

If papers are accepted for review, then they are assigned to an editor, and the next steps are described below. If they are returned to the author for amendment or rejected, then the Managing Editor writes a personalised email to each author, providing detailed explanations of the issues that need attention.

2.2.1. A note on author responses

Most authors respond positively to initial requests for amendments. Upon resubmission their paper is re-evaluated following the same steps as above, and is then forwarded for review. However, nearly half of authors do not fully address the issues requested, and a minority of authors object to them. Sometimes this is due to language barriers, sometimes because authors do not understand or agree with the amendments, or have simply rushed their response. Frequently, it is because the authors' education has focused on the scientific procedures in their study, but has not incorporated writing skills for publication. At this point we attempt to offer one additional opportunity to authors, but this consumes yet more editorial time. On rare occasions we have received responses to our requests in an inappropriate tone, where authors express disdain for the need to have their paper professionally edited for language, or claiming that they do not see the problem we have raised. Fortunately such cases are few, and result in rejection, but it is an example of how much editorial time is invested regardless of the outcome.

2.3. Editor assignment and peer review

When a manuscript has passed technical checks, the Managing Editor will assign the most appropriate editor depending on the manuscript's topic. Editors handle up to 70 manuscripts at any one time. It should also be noted that all JBMT's editors are either high-ranking academics, or established clinicians, and in some cases, they are both. JBMT work is invariably carried out alongside their daily professional duties – the Managing Editor is the only full-time member of editorial staff. Some journals work differently and editorial duties are shared in different ways, but the overall processes will be similar.

The first task of the specialised handling editor is to perform a more in-depth evaluation of the manuscript and approve it for review. Papers can be rejected without review at this stage if the assigned editor notes flaws in the science or reasoning not caught at the initial evaluation.

If approved for review, the handling editor will search for the most appropriate reviewers for each manuscript. Due to JBMT's mission statement and emphasis on clinical relevance, they will aim to assign one researcher and one clinician to each paper, depending on its topic. This is to ensure that both aspects of a given study are evaluated. At any one time, reviewers can have up to 12 papers queued.

2.3.1. Peer review

Reviewers must critically evaluate each manuscript for a number of aspects, including the soundness of the study design, its execution, the statistics (if present), the rationale and relevance to clinical practice and current research, the overall quality of the manuscript development, and the quality of the references. They must comment on all these aspects, providing examples and recommendations for amendment. In keeping with our policy, we ask our reviewers to recommend revision rather than rejection if they find the overall premise of a paper to be sound. However, fatal

Table 1
Desk rejection reasons and explanations.

Rejection reason	What it means	How we respond	How can authors avoid this?	What takes so long?
Out of scope	Manuscript may be worthwhile, but does not meet our mission statement and would not interest our readership.	We reject the paper but encourage the author to submit to a more appropriate venue, providing recommendations where possible.	Check the mission statement and prior journal issues to ensure your article is within journal scope.	Papers are examined in chronological order, and the editor may have several dozen papers queued ahead of yours.
Too much overlap with other papers	Our plagiarism checker has identified a large amount of overlap with source material or other articles, laying the manuscript open to accusations of plagiarism.	Papers flagged by the software are checked manually. If the overlap is obviously down to poor writing, we ask authors to revise and resubmit. If plagiarism is obvious and the material is unoriginal, we reject with a warning. If it becomes obvious that the paper has been previously published elsewhere, or repeats findings from previously published material, it is considered malpractice and will receive a stern warning. We adhere to the COPE guidelines for all cases of suspected or actual malpractice.	Never copy text from sources verbatim – learn the art of paraphrasing. Never think that you will be able to get away with recycling a paper or dataset – modern technology will identify this. Some editors may decide to notify your institution if this becomes a repeat offence. This practice wastes editorial and reviewer time and is considered gross misconduct. Consult Elsevier's Author guidelines for more information on this, and other unacceptable practices such as salami slicing and concurrent submission. All of these will be caught by the software and lead to rejection.	As above, but in addition, editors must check each instance of overlap flagged by the software to investigate. This can take several hours in some cases as every instance must be checked against the source with which it overlaps, and a personalised reply written to the author.
Poor quality of English	We are proud to host a truly global authorship and understand that many brilliant scientists do not have English as a first language. Native speakers of English also encounter problems, as their research or clinical skills are sometimes much better than their language skills. We overlook minor errors and provide language support if papers are legible, but cannot expend these resources if English is so poor that it obstructs understanding.	If errors are few and scattered, we send the paper for review and ask authors to correct it at revision stage. If, however, language is so poor as to be impossible for reviewers to understand, we offer one opportunity to have the paper professionally edited for language. After this we are obliged to reject.	All authors for whom English is not a first language should have their manuscript professionally edited before submitting to an English-language journal. It is a matter of respect to editorial staff and reviewers who should not be expected to guess at meaning, which will result in an inaccurate review. If this is not possible due to financial constraints, seek out a colleague who is a native speaker of English, or the Languages department of your institution for assistance. This constitutes the single greatest reason for delays with some manuscripts.	It is our policy to give authors every opportunity to succeed, and we therefore provide sample edits correcting part of the paper. This takes about an hour for each paper needing it. Communication with authors whose English is poor can be challenging, and may require several rounds of correspondence. Authors with good content often fail to understand the degree of the language barrier, so correction is not always optimal and must be repeated.
Lack of adherence to standard scientific reporting guidelines	Scientific papers should follow the approved guidelines for scientific reporting as laid out at https://www.equator-network.org/ . If they do not, the omissions can severely compromise the quality of evidence in a manuscript.	The requirement to follow these guidelines is mandatory at JBMT. Each manuscript is checked manually, and if the guidelines have not been followed, the authors are given one chance to revise and resubmit, followed by rejection if they do not comply.	Always follow these guidelines, and design your research procedure to ensure the highest quality of evidence. For example, investigator blinding, or a clear rationale for the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Following the checklist (eg. CONSORT for RCTs, CARE for case reports, PRISMA for systematic reviews) makes it easier to construct your manuscript and raises the likelihood of acceptance.	The Managing Editor will closely examine the paper, list the missing elements, and return it with detailed guidance on how to correct it prior to consideration for review. This takes over an hour for each paper.
Lack of adherence to Guide for Authors	Each journal has its own requirements for submissions, designed to speed up the review process and avoid common issues. If authors have not read or followed these guidelines, it shows sloppiness and a lack of respect for editorial and reviewer time. Some of the most common issues include incorrect	Authors are given one opportunity to correct the issues, followed by rejection if they do not comply. Important Note: Trials without ethical approval cannot and will not be published.	Always read journal guidelines and ensure your manuscript adheres to them fully. This is part of the reality of academic publication in any field. The guidelines are designed to save time and effort for authors, reviewers, and editors. Getting it right the first time saves time in the long run. Ignoring the	As above, depending on the type and degree of problems. Sometimes several repeat requests must be sent before the author understands that they must comply. This can take days in some cases.

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Table 1 (continued)

Rejection reason	What it means	How we respond	How can authors avoid this?	What takes so long?
Inappropriate writing style	reference style, unblinded manuscripts, omission of IRB no., omission of or insufficient Conflict of Interest statement, failure to register a trial or obtain ethical approval, forgetting to add a Limitations section, or failure to follow one or more of the points in this table. Writing in the sciences needs to be precise, unemotive, unbiased, rational, and as clear as possible. The aim is to provide replicable results, for readers to be able to follow, and to reduce risk of bias at all stages. With an emphasis on clinical relevance, we also require the writing style to be accessible to clinicians, and not only to other researchers. Brilliant scientists do not always realise the importance of good and clear writing, yet their discoveries and contributions cannot be communicated to the world without it. Language barriers can cause further problems.	We provide specific examples and corrections, often editing several pages of a manuscript and adding annotations to assist authors in writing to the appropriate standard expected in professional scientific publishing. If the content is sound we will provide as much assistance as possible; however, authors need to be willing to undertake the required amendments.	guidelines wastes everybody's time and is disrespectful. Ask a senior colleague to read your manuscript before submitting, and if you know you have difficulty expressing yourself in writing, seek professional editorial support prior to submission. Never underestimate the importance of good writing in the sciences: it is as important as the quality of the research itself.	This requires close reading to discern whether content is sound despite inappropriate writing style. Often more than one person must read the paper to decide this. If it is deemed acceptable for review, then the Managing Editor corrects some sample pages and asks the author to then seek professional editing assistance with that as an example. This can take up to 2 h per manuscript, not including the additional communication time needed.
Relevance & Contribution to the Literature	Some manuscripts may be within the scope of the journal, but are either highly theoretical (and of high relevance to researchers, but not clinicians), or extend the existing literature by so little, that the relevance and contribution to the literature cannot be seen.	All manuscripts should incorporate a clear statement of the study's contribution to the literature in both the Abstract and at the end of the Introduction (accompanied by a statement of the aims of the study). If this is not present or clear from the context, authors will be asked to revise and resubmit. If the contribution to the literature proves minimal and simply reiterates existing knowledge, it will probably be rejected.	Before designing a study, consider the contribution it will make to the existing literature. Perform a sound literature review before beginning and ensure your contribution is not minimal. Even a sound study design and write-up cannot compensate for a lack of novelty or relevance, and space constraints mean that minor contributions are likely to be rejected. Students should take particular care with this.	Papers that are largely repetitive of the literature waste everybody's time, as the steps described above must still be undertaken.
Fatal Flaws & Leaps of Logic	One example of a fatal flaw in a study is failure to control for confounding factors. For example, if exploring the efficacy of massage for pain reduction while subjects are taking analgesics and no control group is incorporated, one cannot possibly know whether the massage caused the pain relief or the analgesic, nor is there a measure of comparison. An example of a leap of logic is concluding that a muscle has become stronger after a given treatment is applied, because it has become thicker. Muscle thickness does not necessarily mean increased strength, and if this is not isolated and measured (and controlled for), then one cannot claim that "this treatment strengthens muscles". If all other variables were controlled for, one can say that "this treatment thickens muscles", but there is very little relevance to our readership in such a finding.	Manuscripts in which such fatal flaws or leaps of logic are identified are usually rejected with no further discussion, particularly where the flaw lies in the methodology. If leaps of logic are identified in the Discussion & Conclusion section, but the study itself is sound and more modest conclusions are still relevant, then authors will be given an opportunity to modify the language and resubmit.	Take great care with study design to avoid fatal flaws in the method and execution. It is a great shame to use laboratory resources (and your own time and effort) only to complete a study with unsound scientific method. No reputable journal is likely to publish it. Leaps of logic are sometimes only down to poor writing or language issues, but can also be down to poor reasoning. Check your own assumptions and biases and take great care never to overstate your claims. Better good science and modest conclusions, than sweeping generalisations that make junk science.	As above. Close reading is needed at the initial stage to look for such elements, and to avoid wasting reviewer time. If they are found, the study may be unpublishable, but the author, and editor, has still spent time on it.

Table 1 (continued)

Rejection reason	What it means	How we respond	How can authors avoid this?	What takes so long?
Citations/Reference List	Every claim or statement of fact must be accompanied by a relevant, recent citation. This should not be a secondary citation (someone citing someone else), you should cite the original. In addition, always use the most recent literature: references from the 1970s, '80s, and '90s are only acceptable if you are providing a background to the development of research or if there is truly nothing newer. In addition, when citing evidence for or against a claim, you should ensure you have included both sides of an argument, mentioned any controversies or inconclusive aspects (with citations), and not cherry-picked evidence that only supports your claim. This is considered major bias that will result in requests for major revision at one or other stage. If your whole study was based on biased evidence, it will be rejected. Lastly, old references should only be used when discussing the historical development of a theory or therapy. Old references (pre-2000s) are generally not appropriate.	We ask the authors to revise their reference list and any unsupported claims; if there are statements that are clearly biased we highlight them and ask for modifications. Non-compliance will result in rejection. Equally, we ask authors who use old references to replace or accompany them with more recent ones.	Ensure you do a thorough literature review before beginning your study; examine published manuscripts and familiarise yourself with correct citation styles; educate yourself regarding bias and how to avoid it. Use the most recent available references. These are fundamental to correct scientific writing.	Again, this requires close reading, followed by provision of guidance if the paper is deemed interesting on other levels. When old references are used we sometimes research and recommend newer ones to assist the author.

flaws in reasoning, study design, execution, or a lack of relevance, will result in rejection.

Reviewers are asked to turn manuscripts around within 4–6 weeks of accepting them for review; however this is not always possible due to the queue of submissions, or the small number of specialised reviewers for a given topic. It is important to highlight that reviewers are not paid for their services and undertake reviews in addition to their normal academic or research duties.

This is the stage at which we most often receive fraught queries from authors wondering why their reviews are taking so long. It is important to realise that reviewers cannot meet optimal review deadlines when asked to tackle a large number of papers. Most editors must rely on a small pool of reliable, thorough reviewers, or call in favours from trusted colleagues. Since a proper review can take several hours to complete, good reviewers will take the longest due to the increased workload.

On other occasions editors struggle to find appropriate reviewers for more obscure topics, and must spend several hours searching databases such as PubMed or ScienceDirect to find authors with relevant publications. However, requests to authors who have not reviewed for us before often receive no response, so editors must continue the search.

It is important for authors to understand that lack of an update in their manuscript status does not mean their paper has been forgotten; editors are often frantically working behind the scenes to find the right reviewer, or chase one who has delayed responding. Repeated requests for status updates force editors to stop this work in order to reply – thus delaying the process further.

2.4. Reviews and revisions

At JBMT all manuscripts undergo two double-blind reviews. Double-blind means that neither the author, nor the reviewer, knows each other's identity, in order to minimise the possibility of bias.

Once the handling editor receives the reviews, they will read the manuscript and both reviews carefully, adding editorial comments covering any additional points they note in the manuscript.

Editors will consider the reviewers' recommendations (Reject; Major Revisions; Minor Revisions; Accept), and add their own. If there are large differences of opinion, first the Managing Editor, then the Editor-in-Chief will be called on to examine the paper and the recommendations before making an initial decision, and a third reviewer may be called upon to break the impasse if necessary. In such situations, the review stage can take longer.

The manuscript along with both reviews and the editorial comments are then returned to the Managing Editor, who reads all the items, adds comments and/or annotations to the manuscript, and returns them to the author with instructions.

When major or minor revisions are called for, authors are asked to return their revised manuscript, accompanied by a second document that lists all review comments, their responses to them, and an indication of where the changes are found in the revised manuscript. They are also asked to highlight each revision in the new version of the manuscript for ease of identification.

2.4.1. Returning revisions

When revisions are returned, often many weeks after reviews were sent to the author, the Managing Editor must evaluate them anew. This includes reading the history of the manuscript, then the revision alongside the review comments and the author's responses to them. If the author has not followed the instructions, this takes much longer and results in the paper being returned to the author for correction.

If the Managing Editor is satisfied by the revisions, and no major

flaws were highlighted by reviewers (in the case of minor revisions on mainly technical points), then acceptance for publication can sometimes be issued at this stage and the paper does not need to be sent for re-review. However, the Managing Editor may be handling several dozen revised manuscripts alongside several dozen new submissions at any one time. These are handled in chronological order of receipt; therefore it may take some time before she reaches each paper, as more arrive daily.

If major revisions were called for and serious flaws or points of specialised knowledge were flagged by reviewers, then the revised manuscript will need to undergo re-review. In these cases the Managing Editor will return the manuscript to the original handling editor, and they will return it to one of the original reviewers if available. This is one of the slowest stages as these papers must be closely checked, and new reviews written. When complete, the manuscript, recommendations, new review, and editorial comments are returned to the Managing Editor, who will then repeat the steps in point 1.4 above. These stages are repeated until reviewer and editorial critiques are fully satisfied.

2.4.2. Barriers to acceptance after revision

Delays can occur if authors do not fully satisfy reviewers and editors on key points that bring the scientific integrity of the manuscript into question, and acceptance for publication will not be granted until authors can allay these concerns. There are many occasions upon which, once again, either the language barrier or an author's lack of understanding of the significance of a point can cause difficulties at this stage. If authors have not complied with reviewer and editorial instructions, the manuscript may be returned numerous times before this stage can be completed. Most journals reject if the revision does not satisfy requests: at JBMT we try to assist the author in getting it right; though it should be noted that this goes above the call of duty.

Particularly early-career researchers may believe that because their supervisor has approved a project, it must be acceptable, and they may think that editors are simply insisting on an obscure point of principle. Other researchers may be so heavily invested in their field of interest that they become blind to certain flaws in their method, leading to unacceptable degrees of bias. Still others may be invested in points of ideological principle. Editors and reviewers must be vigilant for this and judge whether such instances of bias have affected the data, in which case a study must be rejected. If they have only affected the write-up, the Managing Editor will work closely with the authors to attempt to improve the manuscript. All authors are given this level of attention at this stage of the process, but publication is still not guaranteed.

It is the editors' priority to ensure that papers published are scientifically sound, and that even if the level of evidence is moderate to low due to the study design, a small cohort or lack of control group, the research question and study execution are sound enough for it to objectively make a modest contribution to the literature. This means that at worst, it can act as a pilot or feasibility study for future research to rest on. Acceptance will not be granted unless this can be done. Editors use their experience in research to judge this, and it is critical that authors seeking publication are aware of it. Since this journal prioritises clinical relevance, manuscripts must be reader-friendly and translate into terms useful in the clinical setting.

2.5. Acceptance and pre-publication editing

Once the content and structure of a manuscript satisfies all the requirements, the Managing Editor works with authors to produce the final version prior to publication. At this stage, professional language correction will be required if it was not undertaken earlier in the process, and papers will not be fully accepted until it is completed.

Other technical requirements at this stage may include the formatting or quality of images used in the manuscript, ensuring that all due permissions have been given for use of images and data (these are usually sought in the evaluation stage, but may sometimes be requested at this stage), and correcting variant uses of decimal points (in English only the decimal point, eg. 0.1 is used, and not the comma, eg. 0,1), and so forth. Other possible corrections include repeated misspellings (such as the omission of the dash after pre- and post-) etc.

Further delays often occur at this final stage as authors can overestimate the quality of their language skills, obliging the Managing Editor to repeat requests for correction and provide extensive samples. Once again, this is a significant strain on our resources.

2.6. Production

Once the Managing Editor has approved the manuscript for publication, it is sent to the production team, who perform their own technical checks, and then send it for typesetting. At this stage the author will receive a release form requesting information, permissions, and other details. They then receive the author proofs, which they should check carefully and promptly. The final proof-reading is carried out by the Managing Editor, who will then sign off on the manuscript. It will appear on the journal's website within a few days.

Selection for inclusion in a print issue is normally conducted in chronological order of acceptance. Since JBMT has a large number of submissions, it can take up to a year for an accepted article to appear in print, and this is when it will also be listed in the PubMed database.

3. All in a day's work

A manuscript is seen, handled, and closely read by the Managing Editor no less than 7 times at absolute minimum, as each reading is conducted for a different reason, looking for different things. She will write a minimum of 3 emails to authors with minor revisions, to over a dozen in more challenging cases, and will apply individual edits and annotations at least twice to every single paper.

At any one time, she is handling at least 200 papers at various stages as outlined above, responding to author queries, internal communications between the Journal Office and Editorial Team, co-ordinating the Editorial Team, reporting to the Editor-in-Chief, solving technical problems, and liaising with other staff members. Other regular tasks include writing editorials and assisting the Journal Manager to compile the print issues.

Not all journals have this volume of submissions, and not all of them provide this degree of support to authors. JBMT serves a constantly evolving set of professions for which the evidence base is growing rapidly, and remains faithful to the vision of its founder Leon Chaitow, firstly to host research that provides evidence relating to the bodywork and movement therapies and mo-

dalities it serves; secondly to explore the potential for the closer collaboration and integration between bodywork professions; and thirdly, to support budding authors and researchers. In all cases, the priority must be to critically consider what deserves to enter the scholarly record. The answer is: good science – and this is only achieved by following best practices in all aspects of research production.

We do our best to honour this commitment, and hope that this editorial has provided some small insight into the inner workings of our team. We rejoice in our authors' successes as we share in their frustrations. Each and every researcher doing work relevant to JBMT is important to us, and we ask them to remember that we too, have all walked in their shoes.

In closing, we ask readers and authors alike to spare a thought for the reviewers who put in their time *pro bono* to help further the fields we all serve, and for the editors whose only focus is

you and your work. We thank you for your trust, and ask that, by respecting our time, you help us to sustain the effort that goes into making JBMT a reality.

Reference

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