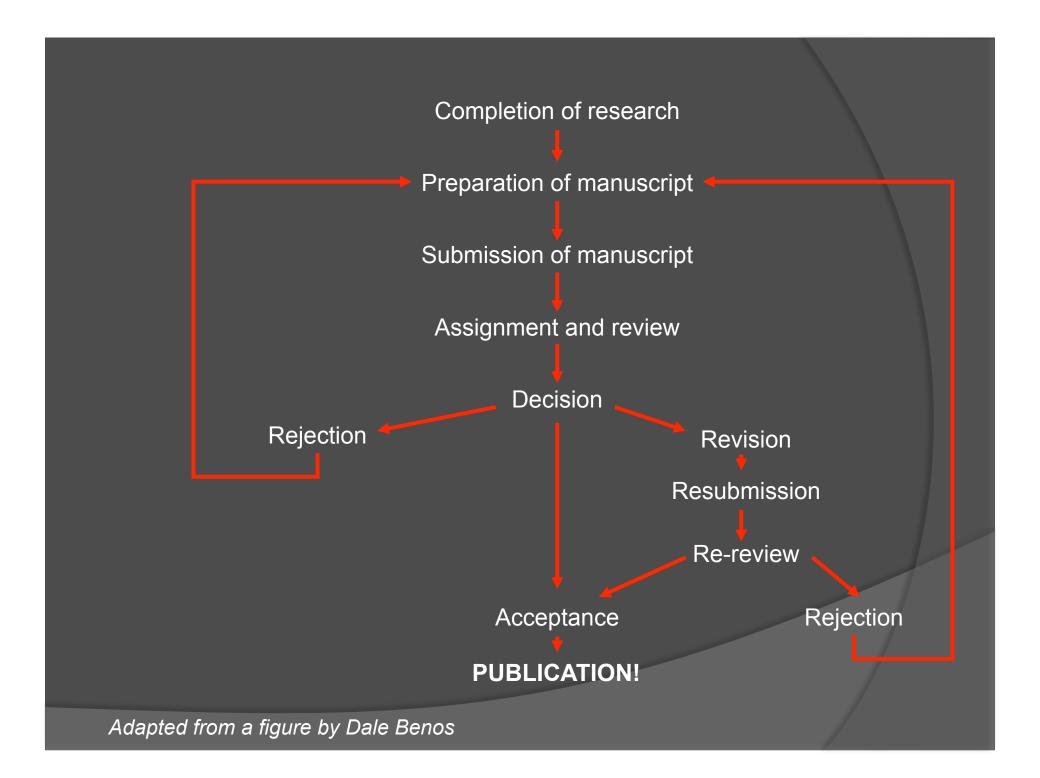
# THE PEER REVIEW JOURNAL PROCESS II: THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SUBMITTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO A PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL AND WHAT TO DO AFTER THE COMMENTS ARRIVE

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# Choosing the Right Journal

#### Target audience

□ "Who would be interested in reading this paper?"

Import and significance of the findings

□ Seek input from colleagues

Decide on the journal <u>before</u> beginning to write

Rank order your journal preferences and then ask yourself the tough questions

Impact Factor Scores and Acceptance Rates may be a first step in making your list of potential journals

- Examine the scope of the journal and description of its contents before submitting.
- Format the paper appropriately (Read the Instructions!)
  - Submitting in another journal's format could suggest that the author may not pay attention to detail.
  - Suggests that the paper has been submitted elsewhere first and it was rejected.

- Look into whether the journal has page charges or submission fees
- Prepare a cover letter that not only says we are submitting the paper but also what the novel findings are (newsworthiness factor)
- Suggest Potential referees and a member of the Editorial Board where appropriate
- Enlist the help of a native English-speaking colleague to assist with the preparation of your manuscripts if English is not your first language

- Read your manuscript carefully prior to submission (don't be a victim to typoblindness!)
- State the hypothesis of your study prominently in the introduction section
- Provide all authors, including students, an opportunity to comment on the manuscript before it is submitted
- Try to make your study complete. Resist the temptation to submit your work as LPU's (least publishable units)

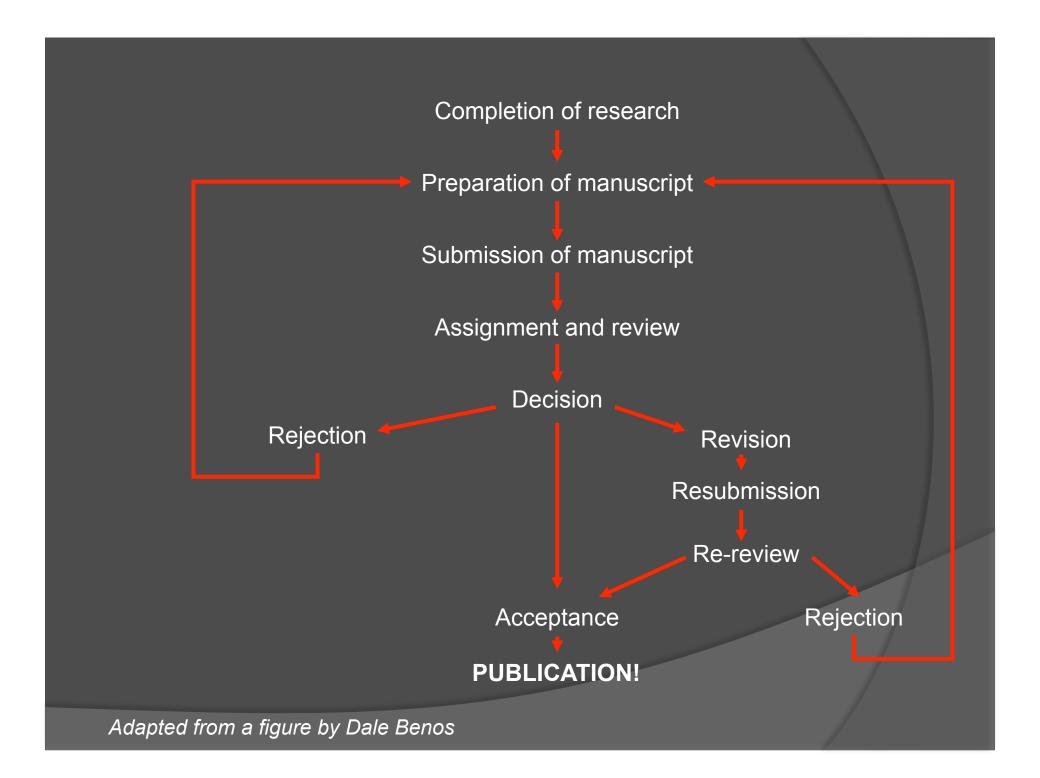
- Be willing to accept constructive criticism from trusted colleagues
- Others??

### The Don'ts

- Assume that everything is OK once you submit your manuscript
  - Things sometimes fall through the cracks
  - If you don't get an acknowledgement in a couple of days follow-up
  - If you don't hear about the status of your paper in 2 months contact the journal to inquire on how the review is going
- Include data that has been published previously, other than in abstract form.

### The Don'ts

- Rely too heavily on the spell-check feature of your word processor (but do use it!). Don't include titles on figures intended for publication
- Give co-authors unlimited amounts of time to comment on the manuscript. Set them a deadline after which you will proceed with the submission with or without their input.
- Others??



# Explaining Editorial Decisions' Categories

- Reject Without Review
- Reject After Review
- Revise and Resubmit (Major)
- Revise and Resubmit
- Revise and Resubmit (Minor)
- Conditional Acceptance or Acceptance

### Thick Skin

- If you don't have it develop it!
- Pay close attention to the criticisms and don't always expect any positive comments
- If the reviewers made some recommendations for improvement, even if they recommend rejection of the manuscript, the reviewer sees at least something worthwhile in your paper

# Resubmitting Your Manuscript

- Don't procrastinate about revising and resubmitting
- Most journals have a two month rule
  - After this time it is considered a new submission and it will go out for re-review
- While the paper is still fresh in the referee's mind, you might get a better reception to your revisions

# Revised Paper

- Assume that the referee will see you response (though often this does not actually happen) and write it as though you are specifically responding to them
- Be courteous and thank them for their input and respond to every single point with a "we did this, see page x, line y" or a "we respectfully disagree for the following reason(s)"
- Spell it all out carefully and logically so that the Editors don't have to fish about for whether or not you adequately addressed the issues

### The Revision Process

- If your paper is returned for revision, you are in good company
- It's OK to get mad, but don't act on it!
- Try to understand what the reviewers are really saying
  - If the reviewers did not understand your work, is it because you didn't present it clearly in the first place?
- Look for clues from the editor (the final arbiter) as to the extent of revision needed
  - Re-writes only
  - More experiments

# Responding to Reviewers

- Complete additional experiments/data collection if needed
- Address all comments in a point-by-point fashion
  - Resist the temptation to prepare an impassioned response to points with which you disagree
  - Stand firm (diplomatically) if that is truly the right thing to do
- Sincerely thank the editor and reviewers for helping you to improve your work
  - They have invested a lot of time, mostly on a voluntary basis
- Ask a neutral colleague to review your response

# Major Reasons for Rejection

- Inappropriate for the journal
  - Do your homework
- Merely confirmatory/incremental
  - Avoid LPU's
- Describes poorly-designed or inconclusive studies
  - Focus on your hypothesis
- Poorly written
  - Great science in an ugly package can still be rejected

# Questions/Comments?