

# Dealing with Editors

- Authorship
- Selecting an appropriate journal
- Cover letter to Editor
- Plagiarism
- Revising: responding to referees' criticisms
- Your second letter to the Editor
- Copy Editor and Proofs

# Authorship

- Deciding on who counts as author
  - Criteria for inclusion
  - Authorship order
- Who will lead?
  - Division of labour
  - Setting timetable
- Your responsibilities as lead author

# Selecting the right journal

- Make a list of possibilities, the pro and cons, and an order
  - Try x first (why?); try Y second (why?)
- Which audiences are you trying to reach?
- Do you want to aim high or get your paper published rapidly?
- Might you want to reach audiences in several fields?
  - The pros and cons of interdisciplinary journals
- How important is the Impact factor?
- Does Impact factor always reflect journal status?

# Cover letter to the Editor

- This letter may be crucial!
- Make the editor WANT this paper!
  - Try to ensure that the Editor doesn't read and reject without even sending to reviewers
- Show that you know this journal
  - Explain how your article is (a) appropriate in this journal and (b) offers something new
- But don't overstate claims you make!
- Address the editor by name

# Avoiding any suspicion of plagiarism

- Rarely a problem but...
- Always be scrupulous in your referencing – regarding both data and argument
- Always insure you are using your own words and style

# Revising 1: responding to referees' criticisms

Likely responses

- **Accepted but asking for minor changes**
- **Potential acceptance after more changes**
- **Revise and resubmit (no guarantees)**
- **Reject**
  
- Rejection without reviewers' comments gives you no guidance (but may be quick)

BUT

- Rejection with reviewers comments may be very useful (in the end!)

# Revising 2: responding to referees' criticisms

- If 2-4 reviewers, then order their comments:
  - Sort major from less significant
  - Decide which ones you MUST address
  - Decide how to justify not addressing some criticisms
- Helpful: the comments which help you develop your analysis
- Tricky 1: the comments which highlight your lack of data
- Tricky 2: the comments which require space you don't have
- Wrong: the comments which misunderstand your article

# Revising 2: responding to referees' criticisms

- Identify further reading or analysis you need to do
- Set a timetable and involve your co-authors
  - Division of labour
- Remember to check that the revisions are reflected in the Abstract



# Your second letter to the Editor

- This letter is even more important than the first
- You have to convince the editor you have taken reviewers criticisms seriously
  - This does not mean you have to agree with every criticism
  - But you must not give the impression you have been selective!
- What to do if reviewers ask for contradictory things?
  - Seeking clarification from the editor
- Your letter makes the overall case defending your judgement and decisions

# Copy Editor and Proofs

- Very short deadlines
- Can be time-consuming
  - Minimise by preparing text adhering to journal guidelines
- Can be excellent, or a problem
- Do check, and re-read the script!
  - You don't want bits missed or misrepresented
- As with editors, try and communicate directly with an individual

# Extract from an Editor's letter after Review

- We are writing to let you know that the initial review of your paper entitled “Health System Challenges of Non-Communicable Diseases in four Eastern Mediterranean Countries” has now been completed. We are enclosing the detailed comments from the peer reviewer for your manuscript. As you will see, the reviewer details a series of general and specific concerns that would need to be addressed in the revision of the manuscript. Should you decide to revise your manuscript, we would be pleased to have it re-reviewed, but we would encourage you to respond substantively to the reviewer's suggestions. Also, please be sure to include a point-by-point response to the referee's comments and include this with your revisions. Because of the extensive revisions that are required, we will review the manuscript in-house before sending it for re-review.

# An author seeks clarification from the Editor

- Thank you for your letter explaining your decision on the paper... We intend to revise and resubmit, in full understanding that 'major revisions' means re-review. However, I'd like to ask for a steer from you, as Editor-in-Chief, on a couple of points.
- First, it appears that your reviewer is essentially asking us to put a lot of the material in a table, figure or box (main points 1, 2 & 4). Can I check whether that is what you want to see also... Are the tables meant to replace the textual analysis?... Your guidance would be helpful.
- Second, the comments about neo-liberalism and our use of the concept of 'legibility' from Scott's 'Seeing like a State' are also somewhat unclear. If the reviewer is arguing that this section of the argument is misplaced and should be dropped, we would have a problem, because... If, on the other hand, the reviewer is saying that we need to do more to clarify and explain the relevance of a discussion of neo-liberal models and 'legibility', then fine. It would be helpful to get your guidance here also.