

# EDITOR'S CORNER

## The Arts of Writing and Publishing Research Papers

### I. Why Publish?

For transmission of *important* and *new* information. Unpublished data are as good as zero.

### II. Types of Papers

- a. Original research work in refereed journals
- b. Review of current topics in refereed journal or trade journal
- c. Report of routine work
- d. Tabulation of survey works
- e. Books and theses
- f. Proceeding abstracts

### III. Personal Standards

You should aim for perfection in word usage, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, numbers, years, authors, tables, figures, legends, etc.

### IV. Quality Versus Quantity and Length Versus Importance

You never really know! There is no good rule for these issues. Ideally scientists should publish good and useful papers in reasonable numbers in a career. "Publish or perish" is still very real in academia.

### V. When to Start Writing a Paper?

- a. It is a continuous process
- b. Is the proposed research work publishable? If not, don't do it.
- c. Constantly upgrade literature collection
- d. Clear cut experimental protocol and be consistent
- e. Good data management and retrieval system
- f. Write immediately when objects are fulfilled
- g. Have art work done as soon as possible
- h. Remind secretary to save time for *YOUR* paper
- i. Set deadlines and keep them

### VI. How Does a Manuscript Become a Published Paper?

- a. Complete writing a *perfect* manuscript; send it to a colleague for review and then send it to an internal institutional reviewer for *clearance*.

- b. Send the necessary number of copies to the *appropriate Journal Editor*. Follow the format of the Journal carefully.
- c. Editor sends manuscript to Peer Reviewer #1 and Peer Reviewer #2. Usual time is two weeks to review. If there is a problem, the editor sends to a third Peer Reviewer.
- d. Results can be:
  - i. Accept as is (RARE). You are happy.
  - ii. Accept with major or minor changes. You are also happy.
  - iii. Recommend more work. You are not happy.
  - iv. Reject. You are very unhappy. Do not give up! Repeat experiments or send to another Journal.
- e. Paper accepted. Rejoice!
- f. Printer will send *Galley Proof*. You proof carefully, word by word! Order reprints and send corrected manuscript back on time (usually 48 h).
- g. After about ONE year from the starting point, your paper appears in press. Another refereed *Journal* article! Good for your morale and career advancement.

DANIEL Y.C. FUNG