

From Submission to Success: Insider Tips for Getting Your Addiction Content Published

David A. Fiellin, MD, FASAM, Orrin D. Ware, PhD, MPH, MSW,
Chung Jung Mun, PhD, Alexa Anderson, PhD, Marcela Smid, MD, MA, MS, FACOG, and
Frank J. Vocci, Jr., PhD

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Disclosure Information

From Submission to Success: Insider Tips for Getting Your Addiction Content Published

Saturday, April 26th, 2025 1:15-2:30pm

Davi A. Fiellin, MD, FASAM

- ◆ Dr. Fiellin's wife is Founder of Playbl, Inc. which disseminates serious videogames for substance use prevention



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Saturday, April 26th, 2025 1:15-2:30pm

Orrin D. Ware, PhD, MPH, MSW

◆ No Disclosures

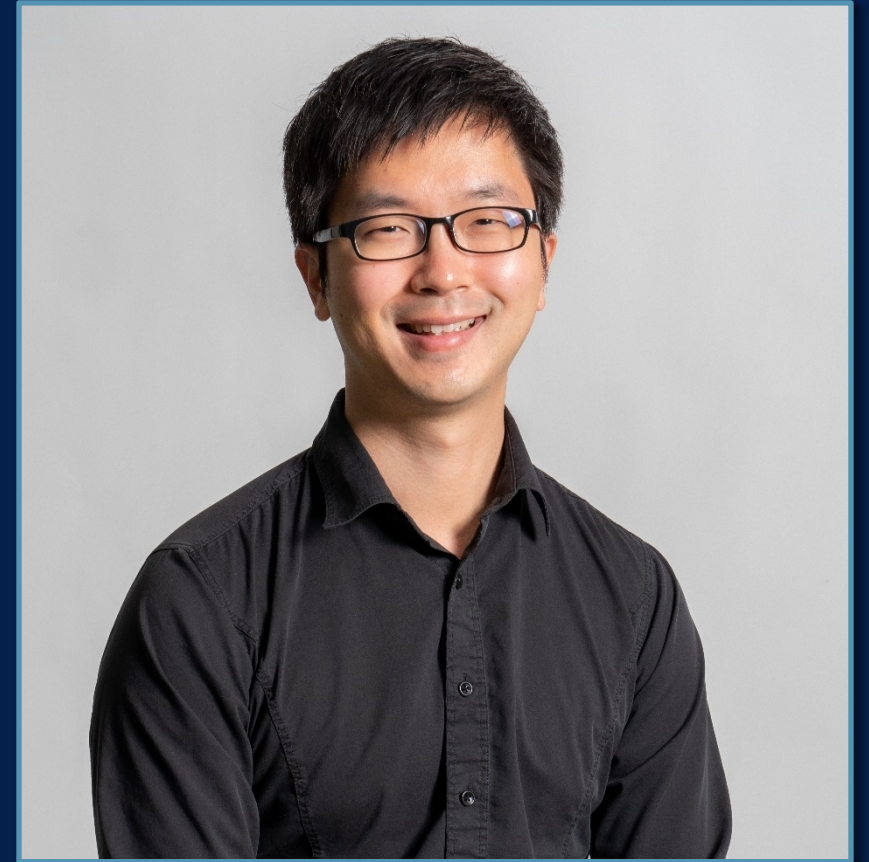


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Chung Jung Mun, Ph.D.

◆ No Disclosures



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Alexa A. Anderson (Lopez), PhD

◆ No Disclosures



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Marcela Smid MD MA MS

- ◆ Unrelated to this work, MCS's institution receives funding to support research time from Gilead Sciences Inc and Koko Medical. Previously, MCS's institution received funding from Organon Inc.



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Saturday, April 26th, 2025 1:15-2:30pm

Frank J Vocci, PhD

- ◆ Consultant to Relmada Therapeutics on development of esmethadone for treatment-resistant depression
- ◆ Received consulting fees which go to my employer, Friends Research Institute



Disclosure Information (Required)

- ◆ Presenter 1: David Fiellin
 - ◆ Presenter 1: Dr. Fiellin's wife is Founder of Playbl, Inc.
- ◆ Presenter 2: Orrin D. Ware
 - ◆ Presenter 2 Disclosures: "No Disclosures"
- ◆ Presenter 3: Chung Jung Mun, Ph.D.
 - ◆ Presenter 3 Disclosures: "No Disclosures"
- ◆ Presenter 4: Alexa A. Anderson (Lopez)
 - ◆ Presenter 4 Disclosures: "No Disclosures"

Learning Objectives

- ◆ Introduction from the *Journal of Addiction Medicine* (JAM) Editor-in-Chief
- ◆ Dos and Don'ts for Journal Submissions
- ◆ Crafting Effective Response Letters
- ◆ Navigating Ethical Challenges

Introduction from the *Journal of Addiction Medicine* (JAM) Editor-in-Chief

JOURNAL OF

Addiction Medicine

The Official Journal of the American Society of Addiction Medicine

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Current Issue



January/February 2025 - Volume 19 - Issue 1

Editor-in-Chief: David A. Fiellin, MD, FASAM

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Ranking: Substance Abuse: 5/55

Impact Factor: 4.2

[🔔 eTOC Alert](#)

Journal of Addiction Medicine

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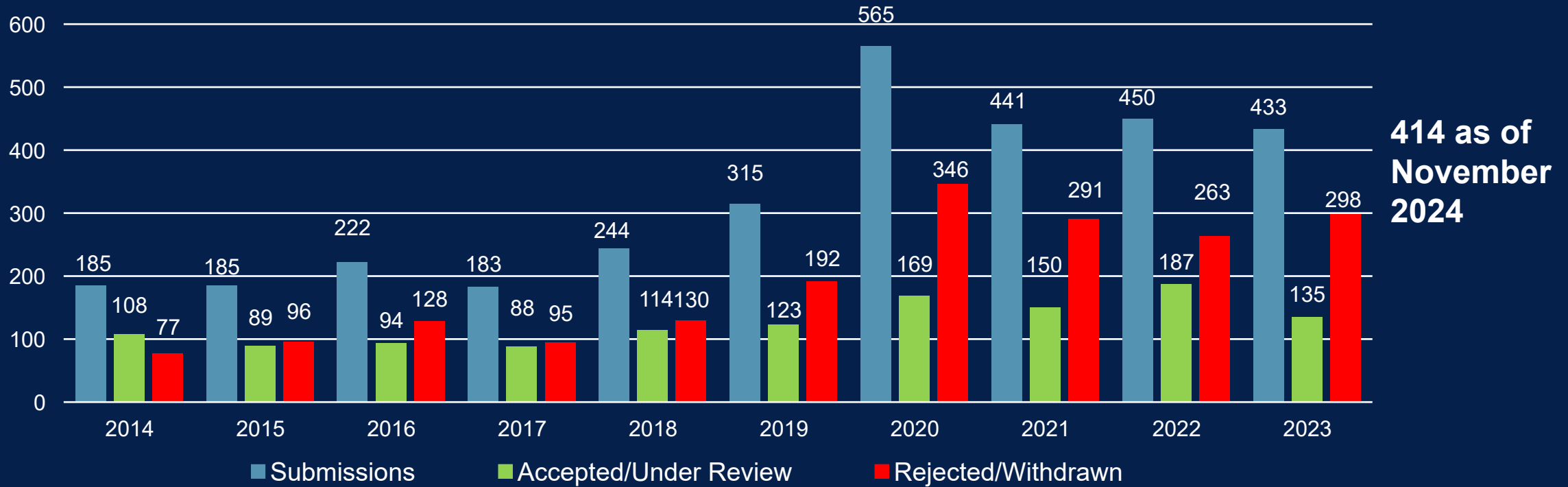
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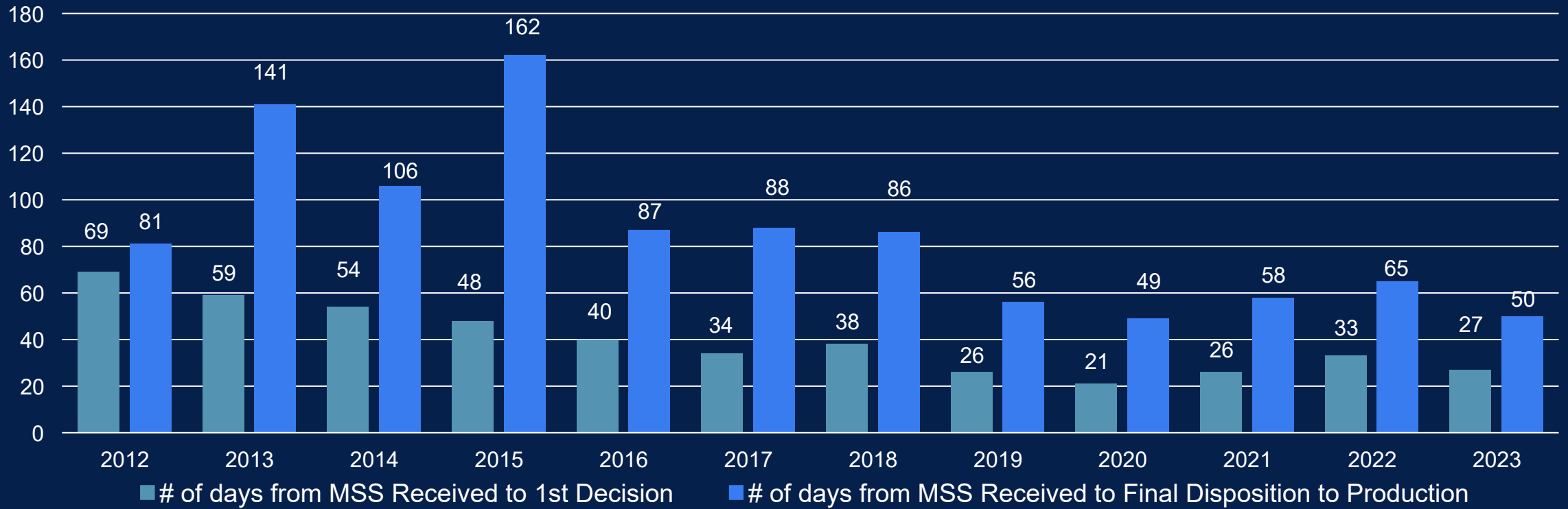
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Manuscript Trends Year Over Year

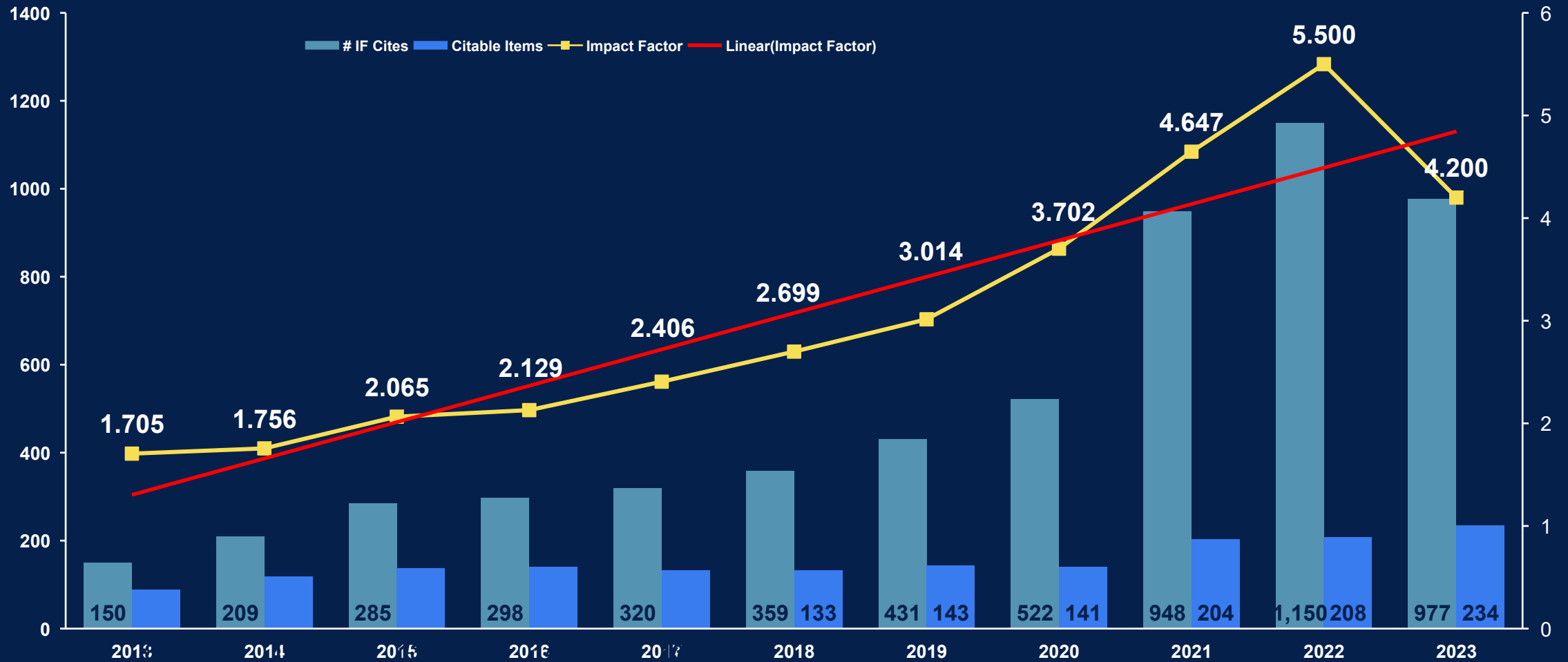


The 2023 submission rejection rate was 68.8%
The 2022 submission rejection rate was 58.4%
The 2021 submission rejection rate was 66.0%
The 2020 submission rejection rate was 64.5%
The 2019 submission rejection rate was 60.9%
The 2018 submission rejection rate was 53.2%
The 2017 submission rejection rate was 52.0%

Time to Decision Trend



Impact Factor Trends



EIC Year Two Observations

- JAM readership extends way beyond ASAM members
- The ranking and impact of *JAM* continues rise
- *JAM* and other addiction journals are in competition with top tier general medical journals for the best addiction science
- To help maintain relevance to practitioners and increase NIH-funded submissions we have current calls out for papers related to Xylazine, Fentanyl, and NIH HEAL supported research
- Continue to see a predominance of opioid-related submissions

DOS AND DON'TS FOR JOURNAL SUBMISSIONS

Publishing Your Idea

- ◆ Insert your brilliant idea here [_____]
 - It was approved after ethical review.
 - The results are available.
 - You have a firm idea for a commentary piece.
- ◆ Now it's time to submit your idea for peer review.
 - Publish to reach clinicians and researchers internationally.

Identifying the Journal

- ◆ Identify a potential journal.
- ◆ Consider the **Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)** terms or Keywords that best describe your paper.
 - Epidemiology, Opioid-Related Disorders, Heroin Addiction
- ◆ Search established databases such as PubMed to identify journals using these terms.
- ◆ Discuss with colleagues and mentors.



Familiarize Yourself with the Journal

- ◆ Explore the Journal's Website.
 - Journal information and scope.
 - About the journal.
 - Previous publications.
 - Editorial board.
- ◆ The journal's outward facing guidance on research it considers.
- ◆ One example of a potential addiction-related paper title.



Oshiro J, Caubet SL, Viola KE, Huber JM. Going Beyond "Not Enough Time": Barriers to Preparing Manuscripts for Academic Medical Journals. Teach Learn Med. 2020;32(1):71-81. doi:10.1080/10401334.2019.1659144

Which Addiction Journal?

◆ Things to consider

- Basic science vs. patient oriented research
- Research design: Quantitative vs. qualitative
- Substances involved, addictive disorders included
- **Previous publications – Prior focus often predicts future interest!**
- Level of interest to clinicians and researchers
- What the journal has published recently

Instructions for Authors

- ◆ Your idea aligns perfectly with the journal.
- ◆ One of the most important "Dos"
 - Read and thoroughly understand the:
 - Author Instructions
 - Instructions for Authors
 - Guide for Authors

Instructions for Authors

- ◆ Imperative to follow.
- ◆ Roadmap that determines whether your paper will be considered.
- ◆ Details essential components such as:
 - Formatting
 - Word Limits
 - Reference style



Journal of Addiction Medicine. Instructions and Guidelines.
<https://journals.lww.com/journaladdictionmedicine/Pages/Instructions-and-Guidelines.aspx>

Instructions for Authors

- ◆ The *Journal of Addiction Medicine* [JAM] as an example:
 - Text count for original research: 3,500 words
 - Total references for original research: 40
 - Total tables and figures for original research: 5
- ◆ Consider your submitted original research to JAM has:
 - Text Word count: 3,000
 - Total references: 100
 - Figures: 7 and Tables: 10



Pre-Submission Inquiry

- ◆ In some instances, contacting the journal to inquire about your idea's potential fit may provide clarity.
- ◆ Provide an abstract or snapshot of your idea.

Finalizing Your Submission Documents

◆ The Cover Letter

- Write to the journal's Editor describing the importance of your study.

◆ Different Submission Materials

- Commonly identified in the instructions for authors.
- Blinded vs. Non-Blinded?
- Tables separate or alongside the text?

Paper Submission Portal

- ◆ Submission systems vary.
- ◆ Be patient and familiarize yourself with the journal's submission portal.

Paper Submission Portal

- ◆ Complete each page with accurate responses or with the appropriate documents uploaded.
- ◆ Review the PDF or HTML proof of your document.
- ◆ Submit.

The Don'ts

- ◆ Effective strategies to have your paper rejected.
 - Ignore the journal's website.
 - Ignore the instructions for authors.
 - Write the wrong editor in the cover letter.
 - Write the incorrect journal name in the cover letter.
 - Do not include an ethical review statement for human subjects research.
 - Exceed word limits.
 - Other ideas?

Key Takeaways

- ◆ Members of a journal's Editorial Board are key stakeholders in your paper undergoing peer review.
- ◆ Strictly adhering to the journal's scope and instructions can be the first step in having your paper considered.

CRAFTING EFFECTIVE RESPONSE LETTERS

The Revision Process: A Simple Journey...or Not



Why Response Letters Matter?

- ◆ Your response letter is your advocate!
- ◆ It can tip the scales from rejection to acceptance.
- ◆ Good response letters can expedite the review process.

Who Read Response Letters?

- ◆ **The Editor-in-Chief and/or Associate/Section Editor**

- ◆ They will read the letter carefully to decide whether manuscript to be:
 - ◆ Rejected
 - ◆ Sent back to the original or to new reviewers for further reviews
 - ◆ Accepted as is or with minor revision

- ◆ **Reviewers**

Before Working on a Response Letter

- ◆ Remember that reviewers **volunteered their time** to review your manuscript with the goal of improving its quality.
- ◆ Reviewers are busy! Don't make them work too hard.
- ◆ Reviewers are critiquing **your study**, NOT you as a researcher.
- ◆ If the feedback feels overwhelming, **gradually expose yourself to the comments over time**.
 - ◆ Read them multiple times across different days to reduce emotional reactivity.

Key Principles of an Effective Response

- ◆ **1. Professional and respectful tone**
 - ◆ Avoid defensive language (e.g., *“We disagree with reviewer...”*)
 - ◆ Show appreciation for reviewer insights
- ◆ **2. Organized and clear formatting**
 - ◆ Use numbered responses to correspond with reviewer comments
 - ◆ Spoon feed them!
- ◆ **3. Evidence-based justifications**
 - ◆ Support your argument with references
- ◆ **4. Concise but thorough explanations**
 - ◆ Avoid vague responses (e.g., *“We revised accordingly.”*)

Overall Structure of Response Letters

◆ 1. Opening paragraph

- ◆ Thank the reviewers and editor for their time
- ◆ Acknowledge the constructive nature of the feedback

Response Letter to the Editor and Reviewers

We appreciate the thoughtful review and the opportunity to revise and resubmit this manuscript. We believe the suggested revisions have significantly strengthened the manuscript. In this letter, we outline how we addressed the feedback provided by the editor and reviewers. For ease of review, we have highlighted the corresponding changes in the manuscript in red.

Overall Structure of Response Letters

◆ 2. Point-by-point responses

◆ Format

- ◆ Reviewer comment (*italicized* or **bolded**)
- ◆ Your response: explain the revision and cite the relevant manuscript section
- ◆ Reference to manuscript changes: provide line numbers and/or pages for easy navigation

13. Line 138: Please list instruments used to make important scientific decisions. For instance, what instrument was used to assess for chronic pain? Is it validated?

Response: The definition of chronic pain that we used to screen participants aligns with what was outlined in the well-validated and widely used chronic pain assessment measure, the Graded Chronic Pain Scale-Revised (GCPS-R), as clarified on line 127-128.

Overall Structure of Response Letters

◆ 3. Closing paragraph

- ◆ Express appreciation for further consideration.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity afforded by the editor and reviewers to revise the manuscript. We hope that the current version is suitable for publication in the *Journal of Addiction Medicine*.

Sincerely,

The Authors

Example of a Strong Response

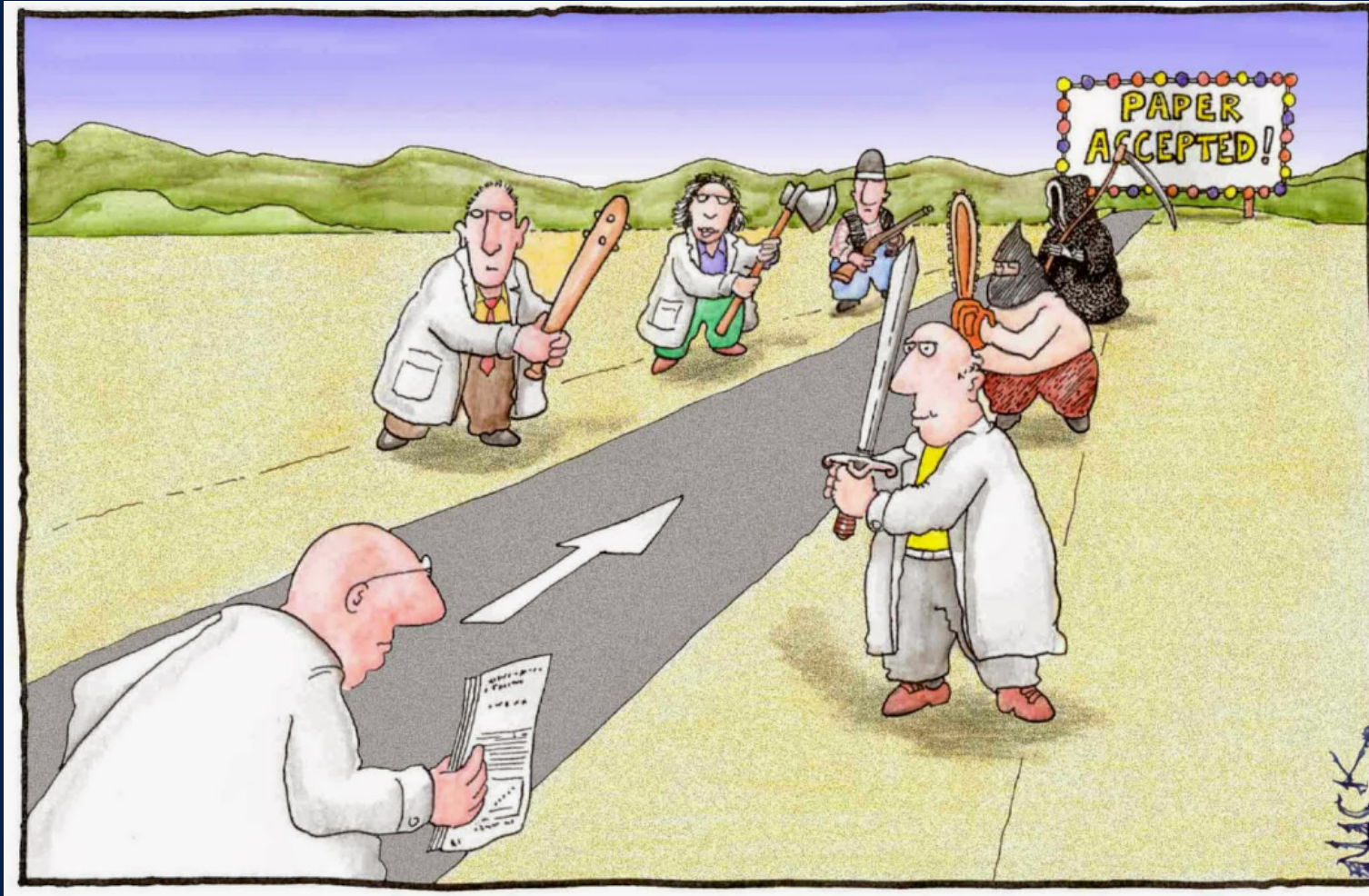
◆ Reviewer Comment:

"The introduction does not adequately cover recent literature on X. Also, provide additional references."

◆ Effective Response:

"Thank you for this valuable suggestion. To address this, we have expanded the introduction to include relevant literature on X (Lines 45–52) by incorporating recent studies by AAA et al. (2020) and BBB & CCC (2019), which provide updated perspectives on this topic. The revised section now states: "XXXXXXXXXXXXX"

Addressing Challenging Feedback



<https://www.astlelab.com/post/think-you-re-your-own-harshest-critic-try-peer-review>

Addressing Challenging Feedback

- ◆ **When a comment is unclear:**

- ◆ Politely request clarification:

"We appreciate this suggestion but would like to clarify whether the reviewer is referring to..."

- ◆ **When you disagree with a reviewer:**

- ◆ Provide a well-reasoned response with strong supporting evidence:

"We appreciate the reviewer's perspective. However, based on recent findings (Author et al., 2021), we believe maintaining the original approach is justified because...XYZ"

- ◆ **When there is a misunderstanding:**

- ◆ If they missed your point, clarify politely:

"We apologize for any confusion. Our original intent was Y. To improve clarity, we have revised Z as follows..."

- ◆ **When a requested change is not feasible:**

- ◆ Offer a justification and, if possible, a compromise:

"Due to dataset constraints, we were unable to conduct this additional analysis; however, we have acknowledged this as a limitation (Lines 210–215)."

Key Takeaways

- ◆ ✓ Start early and allow time for multiple revisions.
- ◆ ✓ Remember that most reviewers are to help improve your paper.
- ◆ ✓ Put emotions aside, even when the reviewer did not.
- ◆ ✓ Remain professional and polite even when disagreeing.
- ◆ ✓ Use a structured format for clarity.
- ◆ ✓ Whenever possible, respond with “We agree” and make the requested change.

NAVIGATING ETHICAL CHALLENGES



What ethical questions should you consider?

- ◆ Authorship decisions
- ◆ Confidentiality concerns
- ◆ Plagiarism
- ◆ Research misconduct
- ◆ Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

Authorship Decisions

- ◆ JAM follows the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines (<http://www.icmje.org/>)
- ◆ Authors must...
 - Make substantial contributions to conception or design of the work, or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work,
 - Draft or revise the work critically for intellectual content,
 - Approve the final version for publication consideration,
 - Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work (i.e., ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved)

Authorship Decisions

- ◆ Are all of the recommended authorship guidelines on the *JAM* instruction to authors met?
 - Yes!
 - Include as a co-author
 - No.
 - Consider including the individual in the acknowledgement section (with their permission) or revise their roles and responsibilities

Confidentiality Concerns

- ◆ Patient/participant confidentiality is of the utmost importance
- ◆ Verify in the manuscript that informed consent or a waiver approved by the appropriate ethical board was obtained for human subjects' research
- ◆ Explain in detail why consent was not obtained, if necessary



Confidentiality and Case Reports

- ◆ JAM's policy for consent in case reports
 - Consent from subject (or parent/guardian) should be obtained
 - State in the cover letter that written consent to publish a report of the case has been obtained by the subject and that it is available for review by the editors and publisher of the journal
 - Is the subject deceased?
 - Consent provided by next-of-kin. If no consent obtained, describe the circumstances of attempting to obtain consent or why it was not possible.
- ◆ If consent is not obtained:
 - JAM will consider the extent to which the case is anonymous, the attempts to obtain consent, and whether there is any reason to suspect that a patient might have objected to publication.
 - The authors should carefully attempt to protect the patient's identity.
 - Even without identifiers, real cases can often be identified by people in the community.

Research Misconduct: Plagiarism

- ◆ All submitted manuscripts should be an original contribution
 - Not previously published
 - Except as an abstract, preprint that adheres to the preprint policy, or preliminary report
- ◆ Cannot be under publication consideration/peer-review in another journal
- ◆ Final responsibility of the validity of the manuscript rests with the authors
- ◆ JAM follows the guidance from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) <http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines>

Research Misconduct

- ◆ Examples of misconduct (not an exhaustive list): data fabrication, data falsification including deceptive manipulation of images, purposeful failure to disclose relationships and activities, and plagiarism
- ◆ Individual assessment by relevant stakeholders
- ◆ If alleged or concerns raised regarding conduct or integrity of work described in submitted/published papers, editors initiate appropriate procedures detailed by such committees as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), consider informing the institutions and funders, and may choose to publish an expression of concern pending the outcomes of those procedures
- ◆ Should an investigation prove misconduct, a retraction or erratum of the article is published
- ◆ Validity of prior published work cannot be assumed

Artificial Intelligence



Artificial Intelligence

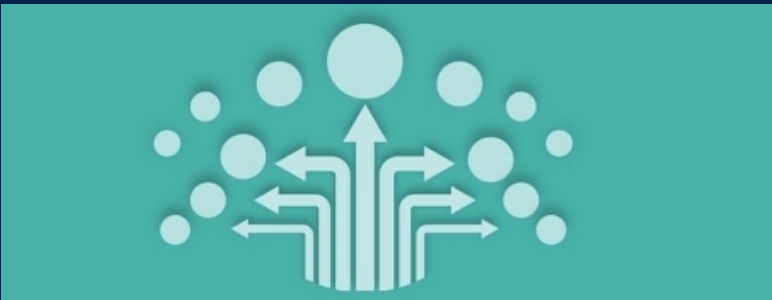
- ◆ Always disclose the use of AI-assisted technologies (such as Large Language Models [LLMs], chatbots, or image creators) in the production of manuscripts.
- ◆ Describe, in both the cover letter and the submitted work in the appropriate section if applicable, how these technologies were used.
 - If AI was used for writing assistance, describe this in the acknowledgment section.
 - If AI was used for data collection, analysis, or figure generation, authors should describe this use in the methods.

Artificial Intelligence

- ◆ Chatbots (such as ChatGPT) should not be listed as authors because they cannot be responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the work, and these responsibilities are required for authorship per ICMJE.
 - Only humans are responsible for any submitted material that included the use of AI-assisted technologies.
- ◆ Carefully review and edit the results from AI-assisted technologies as the generated output may be incorrect, incomplete, or biased.
- ◆ Assert that there is no plagiarism in the manuscript, including in text and images produced by AI.

Considering AI?

- ◆ May reduce time spent writing, but increase time verifying the accuracy of the output and its associated citations
- ◆ Potential amplification of stigmatizing language
 - Racial and gender biases
 - Perpetuating stereotypical-language



Kacena, Melissa A et al. "The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Writing Scientific Review Articles." Current osteoporosis reports vol. 22,1 (2024): 115-121. doi:10.1007/s11914-023-00852-0

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Key Takeaways

- ◆ Always review instructions to authors for journal guidance on ethical concerns
- ◆ Consider biomedical and other policy recommendations when developing your manuscript
 - ICMJE, COPE
- ◆ As AI technologies continue to rapidly evolve, weigh its benefits and drawbacks as a scholarly tool

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