

Editorial

Becoming a Published Author in the *Online Journal of Rural Nursing and Health Care*

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Fit of material to the journal is essential and to become a published author in the *Online Journal of Rural Nursing and Health Care* (OJRNHC), a manuscript must be relevant to our readers. Who are our readers? Primarily those that provide health care or support the health of rural populations. There are two top reasons for an immediate “decline submission”. The first is when author guidelines are not followed such as when the electronically uploaded manuscript has identifiable author information. The more common reason for decline of submission is when the word “rural” is only found in the title or abstract and not integrated throughout the paper. The articles most likely to be accepted for publication in our journal are ones that include the importance of the work to rural health, nursing and or policy.

A “fatal flaw” of a manuscript can also lead at worse to an immediate decline or at best, a “resubmit with major revisions”, which means it goes back through the review process and lengthens time to publication. In connection with research studies, inclusive of human subjects, it is imperative that the protection of these subjects be addressed. Institutional review board (IRB) protocol numbers or exempt status can go a long way to satisfying the reviewers on this front.

A major consideration for reviewers at the OJRNHC is the inclusion of the conceptual or operational definition of “rural” in the manuscript. For data based manuscripts, how “rural” was measured or determined is important to the reader so comparisons can be made across studies. For non-data based manuscripts, a conceptual definition of “rural” will help the reader know what constitutes rural in regards to this work.

An issue that often comes up in query letters is whether the OJRNHC will accept evidenced-based papers or systematic reviews of the literature. The short answer is yes. However, I caution authors to clearly state how they define the inclusion and exclusion criteria not only for their search but also for deciding whether each article will be included or excluded from the review. Seldom is a strong review of the literature limited to only four articles. Graduate program faculty may have students complete a limited review on a specific number of articles as a learning experience. In commenting on those papers, faculty may encourage the author to look into publishing the results; however, that does not mean these papers are publishable as written. Those who are referees for our journal volunteer their time and efforts to support science which is in part based on blind peer review. Many reviewers nurture the next generation of scientist, practitioners and scholars, giving time and effort to provide in-depth comments in critique of a work even if it is not up to standards for publication in the initial submission. Indeed their feedback can be crucial in honing a manuscript for publication. Reviewers' time is valuable and I often have more manuscripts than reviewers in a particular topic area. The decision to "decline submission" without review may be made if it is obvious a review of literature has not been developed in a systematic manner or if it is unclear how the author chose to review a limited number of studies. The best systematic reviews of the evidence are conducted in a way that is reproducible and thorough.

Another critical issue for becoming a published author in the OJRNHC is proper citation. I would agree with an editorial by Gennaro (2012) that authors need to use the style manual of the journal. Here at OHRNHC we use the American Psychological Association style and are currently using the 6th ed. (APA, 2010). A critical component of becoming published is that citations are accurately documented in both the text and on the reference list. Hours are wasted

by editorial staff and manuscripts delayed for publication when references are checked and found to be inaccurate in date, have incomplete citations, or when there are citations in text not on the reference list or the flip is true. Please carefully proof the accuracy of your citations prior to submitting a manuscript. These may not be “fatal flaws” but they also do not endear you as a thorough scholar to the editorial staff or reviewers. And finally the absolute critical component in getting accepted for publication and having your publication seen as scholarly work is to avoid plagiarism. If you cannot improve upon the words of the original author you can properly quote and cite the source and page number, e.g. “Tip 5: Make sure all the words you use are your own.” Gennaro (2012, p. 203). That said, too many quotes often indicate you do not have a good grasp on the material and will lead reviewers to recommend revisions prior to publication. Learn the art of paraphrasing, quote when necessary, and cite correctly.

This editorial does not touch upon all components necessary to writing a publishable paper; however, the ones mentioned above can play a critical role in whether you become a published author in the OJRNHC. So in answer to your query, yes we would be delighted to review your manuscript, provided you at a minimum follow the author guidelines posted at <http://rnojournl.binghamton.edu/index.php/RNO/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

References

Gennaro, S. (2012). Editorial five tips on getting research published. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 44, 203-204. [[MEDLINE](#)]