Writing for Publication in Biomedical Informatics

Abstract: Writing for publication can be a rewarding activity for researchers at all levels of experience. However, many students and researchers are less familiar with the various aspects of the publication process. The purpose of this workshop is to provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and practical advice that can lead to successful scientific publications.

Participants will learn how to plan and prepare manuscripts, select an appropriate audience, decide on an appropriate type of publication, understand the submission, peer review, and editorial decision making process, and learn how to reply to reviewers' comments. Manuscript preparation will include a detailed explanation of the various sections of a manuscript, elements of writing style, use of abbreviations, formatting of tables, preparing of figures, creating bibliographies, and common errors to avoid. Ethical considerations, such as authorship responsibilities, conflict of interest, duplicate submissions, plagiarism, prepublication, etc., will be discussed.

The presenters will share their knowledge and learned lessons from being authors, research advisors, reviewers, editorial board members and editors, so that participants can become more familiar with the process. During the interactive workshop participants are expected and encouraged to share their experiences. At the end of the workshop, participants should understand the scientific publication process and be able to overcome barriers that will lead to successful manuscript submissions.

Keywords (MeSH): manuscript, publication, communication, peer review

Duration: 90 minutes
Level: introductory

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1 This workshop proposal is based on similar workshops that have been presented at MEDINFO2007 and AMIA 2007.
Extended Abstract: Writing for Publication in Biomedical Informatics

1. Description and topical outline of workshop

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The interactive workshop is intended to provide an informal and educational forum for workshop participants. During the first part of the workshop the presenters will discuss information about the various aspects of the publication process, as outlined below, and include practical examples. During the second part participants will have the opportunity to discuss specific questions and share their experience with the audience.

A. Preparing a Manuscript: From Idea to Submission
   - getting your thoughts together (outlines, mindmapping …)
   - targeting your audience
   - how to select a journal, instructions for authors, electronic publications, open access
   - types of papers (research, letters, review, brief communication)
   - your first draft
   - revising your manuscripts
   - writing for the various sections (IMRAD: introduction, methods, results, and discussion)
   - considerations for creating tables, designing figures, and selecting references
   - acknowledgments, keywords, appendices
   - authors and authorship responsibilities
   - aspects of writing style
   - considerations for authors whose primary language is not English

B. Submitting a Manuscript: From Submission to Final Decision
   - submitting your paper
   - communicating with the editorial office
   - revising your manuscript and replying to reviewers’ comments
   - final decision, copy-editing, galley proof

C. Receiving a Manuscript: The Editor’s Perspective:
   - handling submitted manuscripts
   - internal and external review
   - peer review process
   - selecting reviewers
   - editorial decisions
   - communicating with authors

D. Ethical Aspects:
   - authorship
E. Helpful Hints and Common Errors to Avoid

2. Attendee background

No specific background will be necessary. Workshop participants should be interested in understanding the process of scientific publication in biomedical informatics. The workshop targets specifically on the young researcher with limited experience with publishing in the bioinformatics journals.

3. Presentation format

The three presenters will use slide-based presentations. The handouts will at least include: a) the slides, b) pertinent reference material, and c) a bibliography for additional reading material. Interaction between the presenters and the audience is encouraged to address individual questions and needs.

4. Learning Objectives

After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Understand the types and structure of publications (journals, conferences)
- Plan and get started on a scientific manuscript
- Understand how to prepare manuscripts for publication, including tables, graphs, references, etc.
- Realize ethical aspects, such as authorship, duplicate submission, electronic publication
- Understand the submission, review, and editorial decision process
- Know information technology tools that can support the manuscript preparation: mindmapping, bibliographic references, etc.

5. Required Equipment

A beamer

6. Classification

Practice-oriented and educational.

7. Brief Biographies of the presenter(s)

Jan Talmon, PhD, is Associate Professor in Medical Informatics at the University of Maastricht, The Netherlands. He has been active as a researcher in the field of medical informatics for more than 30 years. He has been a supervisor of several PhD students and in that capacity has been involved in training of young researchers in writing scientific papers. As editor of the International Journal of Medical Informatics and as reviewer for several Medical Informatics Journals he has broad experience with well written manuscripts as well as manuscripts of less than marginal quality.

Reinhold Haux, PhD, is Professor of Medical Informatics and Chair of the Department of Medical Informatics at the University of Braunschweig, Germany. He is the author of more than 150 publications and has extensive experience in instructing and supervising graduate students. Besides being Editor-in-Chief of Methods of Information in Medicine, he is the Editor of the IMIA Yearbook and is or has been on the editorial board of several journals, including Artificial Intelligence in Medicine, Computational Statistics and Data Analysis, and International Journal of Medical Informatics.

Nicolette de Keizer, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Medical Informatics at the Academic Medical Center – University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She has been active as a researcher (since
2007 principal investigator) in the field of Medical Informatics for more than 10 years. She has been a supervisor of several PhD students and in that capacity has been involved in training of young researchers in writing scientific papers. Since 2007 she is a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Medical Informatics and as reviewer for several Medical Informatics Journals she has broad experience with well written manuscripts as well as manuscripts of less than marginal quality.