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# How to Get Your Paper Published in a Peer- Reviewed Journal

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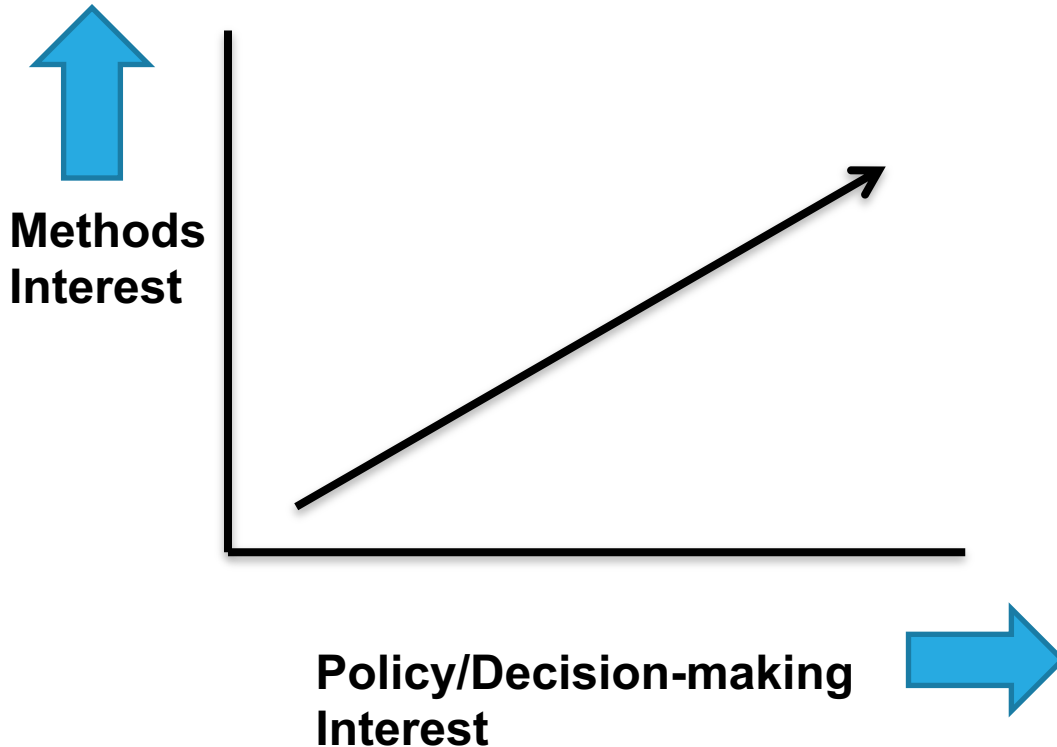
# Background

- *ViH* receives approximately 1300 new submissions per year
- The review process reduces this number to approximately 200 papers published in the journal per year
- *ViH* accepts around 15% of the papers submitted
- If every paper were to be sent out to peer review, we would require almost 3000 reviewers, which is more than are likely to be available
- Therefore, a substantial proportion of papers are rejected after internal review by the journal's editors

# Calibrating the ‘threshold’ for acceptance of papers in *ViH*

- What makes an interesting paper?
- What evaluation will we be doing at each stage?
- What specifically are we looking for?

# What makes an interesting paper?



# What evaluation are we doing at each stage?

## *Editor-in-Chief evaluation*

- *Mainly* an assessment of interest in policy or practice
- *Some* assessment of methodological interest/quality

## *Associate Editor evaluation*

- *Equal* assessment of methodological and policy/practice interest

## *Reviewer evaluation*

- *Mainly* assessment of methodological interest/quality
- *Some* assessment of policy/practice interest

## What Does a Busy\* Editor-in Chief Read First?

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Responses to the questions assessing 'added value' if requested
4. First few paragraphs of the Introduction, maybe more depending on how interesting it seems
5. Discussion and Conclusions
6. Covering letter (maybe, don't depend on it)

\*Last year *ViH* received ~1300 submissions and we each read ~650 of them

# Editor's Evaluation

- Align with the journal's scope
- Represent a novel contribution?
- Use appropriate comparators + methods?
- Match data to the research question?
- Contain bias or a marketing message?
- Use the English language and grammar appropriately?

# Questions to ask of your paper: before the editor does!

- What is already known about the topic covered by my paper?
- What does my paper add to existing knowledge?
- What insights does my paper provide for informing healthcare-related decision making?

# Organization of paper

- Most empirical research fits into the standard ‘Objectives, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions’ structure
- It’s often a good idea to set out, in note form, what you plan to say, before starting to write
- Try to provide a road map for the reader in the introductory section
  - eg First, we will....., then we will....., etc.

# Possible paper structures

- **Empirical papers (the easy one!)**
  - *background; methods; results; discussion; conclusions*
- **Policy perspectives or methods papers**
  - *what's the issue I am addressing?*
  - *what do we currently know about that issue (emphasizing any controversies)?*
  - *what am I proposing and what does it contribute?*
  - *what are the implications for policy or practice?*
- **Commentaries**
  - no clear approach; could start with a 'standout' quote from yourself or someone else; might mention a recent event that prompted your commentary
  - the structure for policy perspectives might work for commentaries

# Reviewer's Evaluation

Questionnaire	Yes	No	Not applicable
Does the manuscript contain new and significant information to justify publication?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does the Abstract (Summary) clearly and accurately describe the content of the article?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the problem significant and concisely stated?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are the methods described comprehensively?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the results?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is adequate reference made to other work in the field?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the language acceptable?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please rate the priority for publishing this article (1 is the highest priority, 10 is the lowest priority)	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>		

Peer reviewers are asked to:

- Evaluate the scientific merit and overall relevance of a paper
- Provide constructive feedback to authors
- Make a recommendation
  - Accept without revision
  - Minor revisions needed
  - Major revisions needed
  - Reject

# Responding to Reviewers' Comments

- Copy and paste the comments into a new document
- Insert your responses, *point by point*, to each comment, even if no substantive response is required
- Indicate where, in the text of the paper, you have made revisions
- Include both a track-change and clean version in your re-submission
- Use this as an opportunity to congratulate the reviewers, not to criticize them

**Note: at this point the editor will be making an assessment of whether you have fixed, or can fix, the paper, or not**

## Under what circumstances do we reject a paper?

If it is clear (at any stage in the review process) that the paper is not of sufficient interest to the journal's readership

If it is clear (at any stage of the review process) that the methodology of the paper is not sufficiently sound and cannot be made sufficiently sound



Questions?

