Step-by-step guide to prepare a successful paper for publication

60 min

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Today's Presentation

1. Why publish?
2. Effective writing
3. Preparing your manuscript
4. How to choose your target journal
5. Submitting your manuscript

Why publish?

1.0

Why publish? To exchange ideas globally…

Research Cycle & Necessity to Publish

Why publish? To exchange ideas globally…

Research Cycle & Necessity to Publish

Publishing step… Your real goal?

Your goal is not only to be published,
but also to be widely read and cited in your field!

Improve readability!
Be an effective communicator!

Effective communication… Write always simple!

"If you can't explain something simply, *you didn't understand it well…*"

– Albert Einstein

- ✓ **Write to express *not* impress**
- ✓ **Consider your audience… They may not be from your field**
- ✓ **Follow K.I.S.S. method of writing**

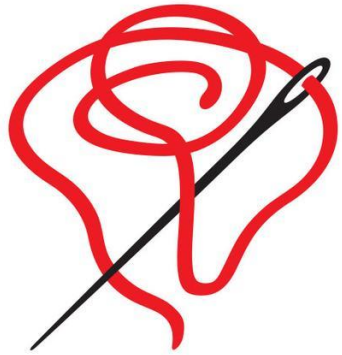
Keep It Simple Short

Effective writing

2.0

Effective communication…. Always ask yourself "What is the **Red Thread**"?

"Red thread" is used to refer to a text that has a context, where the reader can read the whole text without "loosing the thread = train of thought".



Sewing

The text, from beginning to end, has to have a context, a flow.

To keep the *"red thread"*, keep these checkpoints in mind:

1. Before you start to write, identify your purpose and the main topic.

2. Keep to the topic when writing and don't fall out on to too many sidetracks (= detours).

3. All the sentences and paragraphs should be connected with the aim and purpose of the text.

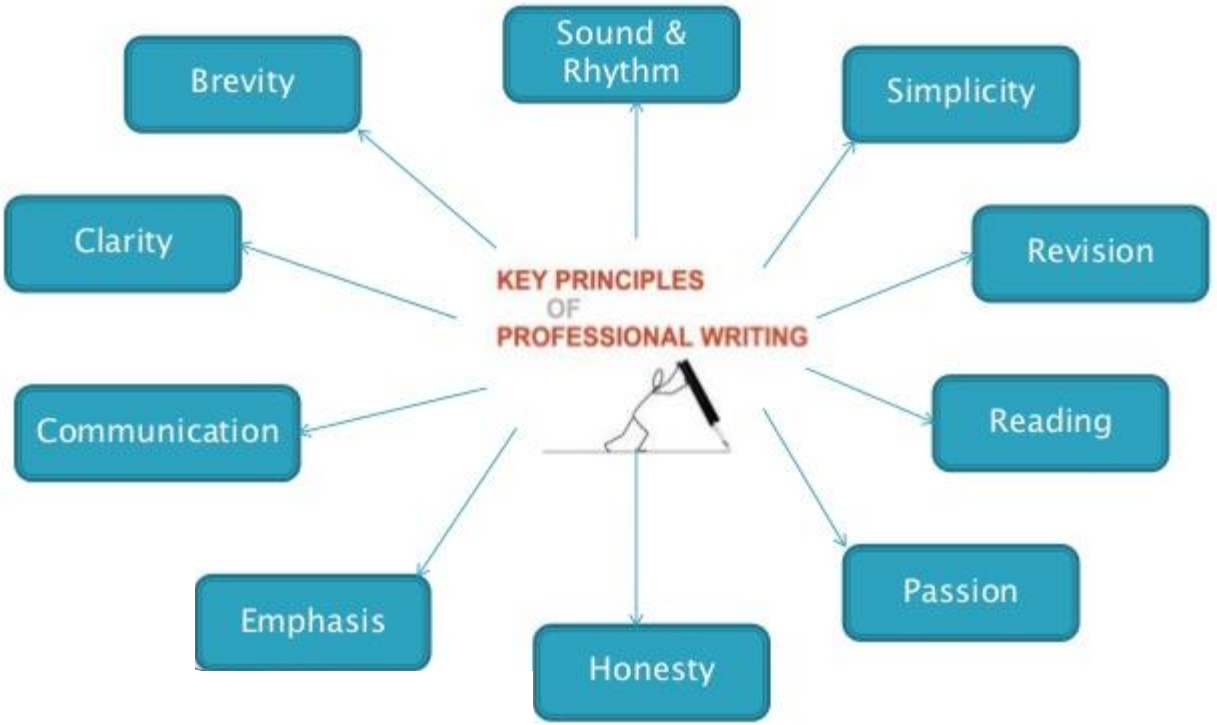
Effective writing to improve readability!

It is writing which has a logical flow of ideas and is cohesive.

This means it holds together well because there are links between sentences and paragraphs.

Writing which is cohesive works as a unified whole and is easy to follow because it uses language effectively to maintain a focus and to keep the reader 'on track'.

Principles of effective writing



Effective writing to improve readability!

Use short sentences

Limit your sentences to 10 – 15 words
One idea per sentence

Use active voice => simple, direct, and easier to read

It promotes simple, straightforward writing.
As such, most scientific journals encourage the use of the active voice over the passive voice

Active: Vitamin A increases the risk of hair loss.
Passive: The risk of hair loss is increased by vitamin A.

Effective writing to improve readability!

Use short sentences

Limit your sentences to 10 – 15 words
One idea per sentence

Active: Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted from industries and vehicle exhausts can induce a series of environmental problems, including photochemical smog, broken ozonosphere, and environmental pollution.

Passive: A series of environmental problems, including photochemical smog, broken ozonosphere, and environmental pollution, can be induced by volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted from industries and vehicle exhausts.

Effective writing to improve readability!

Use short sentences

Limit your sentences to 10 – 15 words
One idea per sentence

However, you should aim to make the language of your article as reader-friendly as possible.

Therefore, it is acceptable to use the passive voice when it is required!

Sentence structure

Which sentence (better) suggests that you *will* get a raise?

1. **You deserve a raise, but the budget is tight.**
2. **The budget is tight, but you deserve a raise.**

Stress position

Readers focus at the end of the sentence to determine what is important.

Source: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/flow/

Logical flow of ideas

The stress position also introduces the topic of the next sentence

Topic position

The budget is tight, but you deserve a raise. Your salary will increase at the beginning of next year.

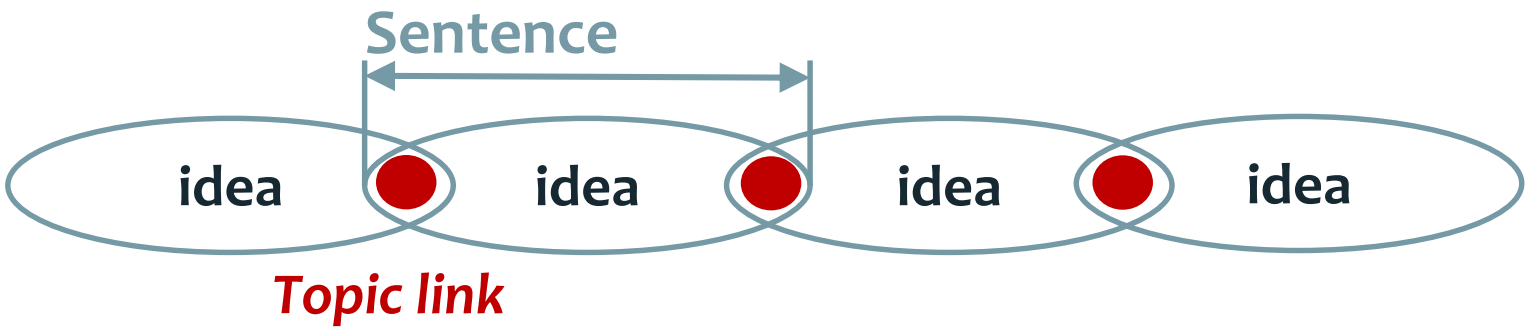
Stress position

Topic position

Stress position

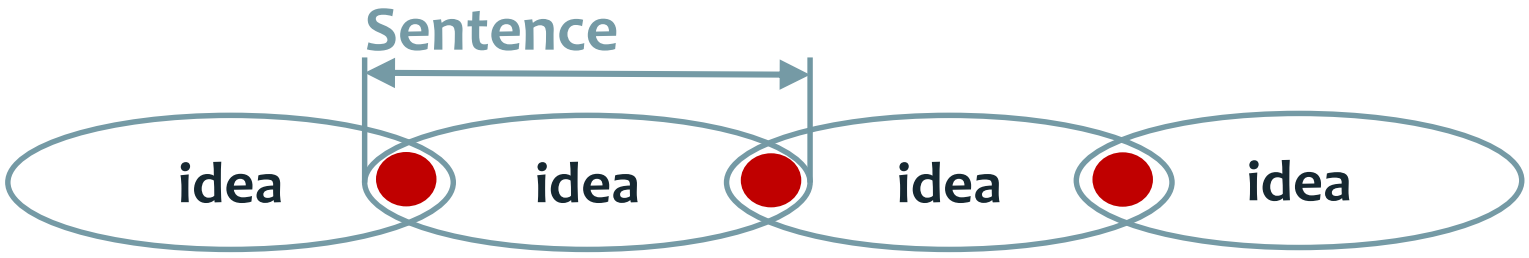
The topic position introduces the idea of each sentence

Logical flow of ideas



TiO_2 surface modification of the scaffold considerably improved its **catalytic efficiency**. The increased efficiency was prominent early in the reaction but **decreased over time**. The lack of long-term effects of TiO_2 surface modification was likely due to the reaction being conducted in an **aqueous environment**. Evaluating additional solvents to improve the catalytic efficiency over time is **currently being investigated**.

Logical flow of ideas



TS

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SS

Logical flow within your manuscript

Topic sentence

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer mortality for men and women. Despite smoking prevention and cessation programs and advances in early detection, the 5-year survival rate for lung cancer is only 16% with current therapies. Although lung cancer incidence rates have r **Support** e United States, more lung cancer is now diagnosed when considered together in former- and never-smokers than in current smokers. Thus, even if all of the national anti-smoking campaign goals are met, lung cancer will remain a major public health problem for decades. New ways to treat or prevent lung cancer are therefore needed.

Stress sentence

Topic sentence

One potential therapeutic target for lung cancer is the Wnt signaling pathway. The canonical Wnt signaling pathway in mammals consists of a family of secreted lipid-modified Wnt protein ligands that bind to a family of 7-pass transmembrane Frizzled (Fzd) receptors, as reviewed…

Busch et al. BMC Cancer. 2012; 13: 211.

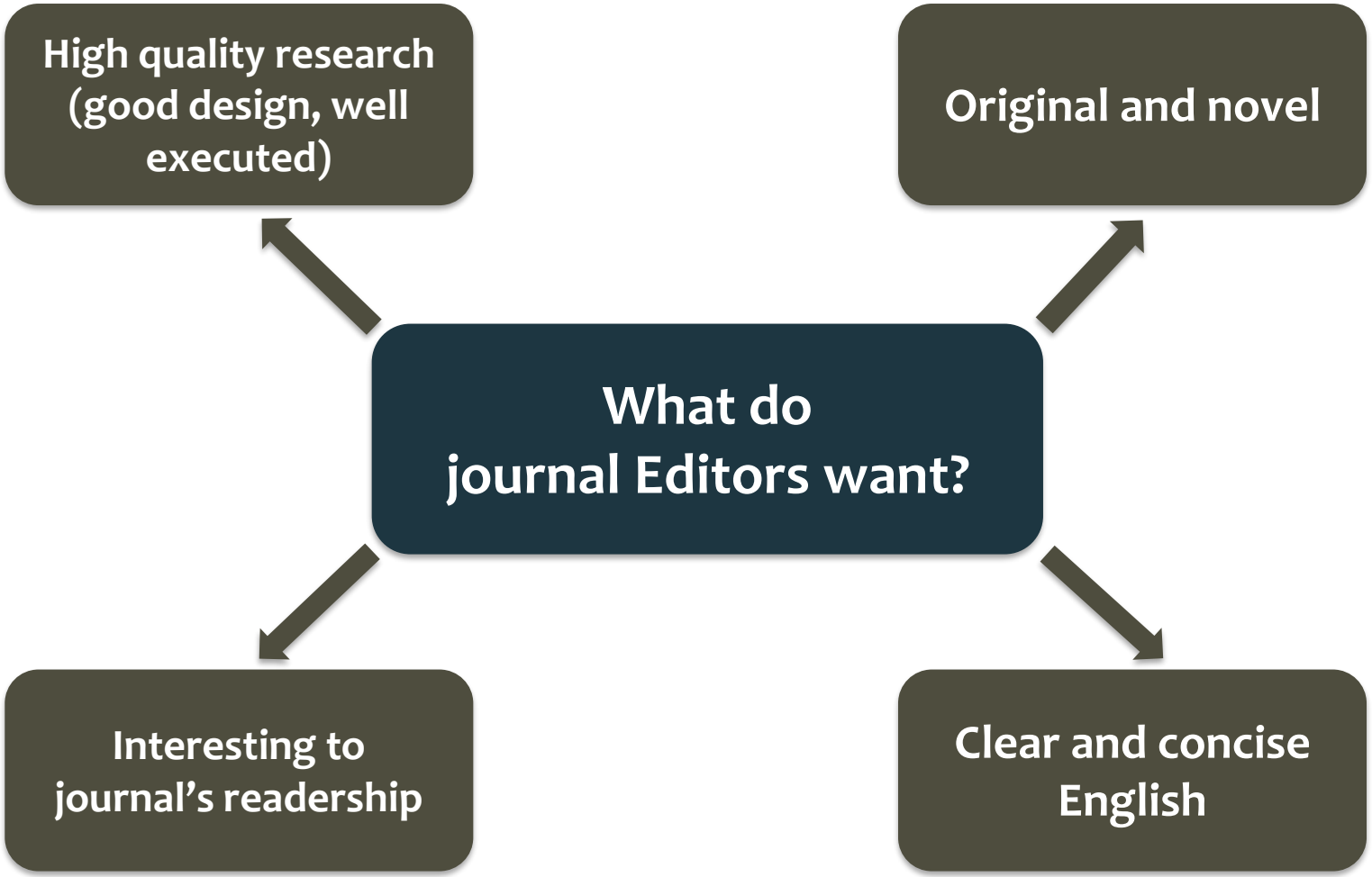
Preparing your manuscript

3.0

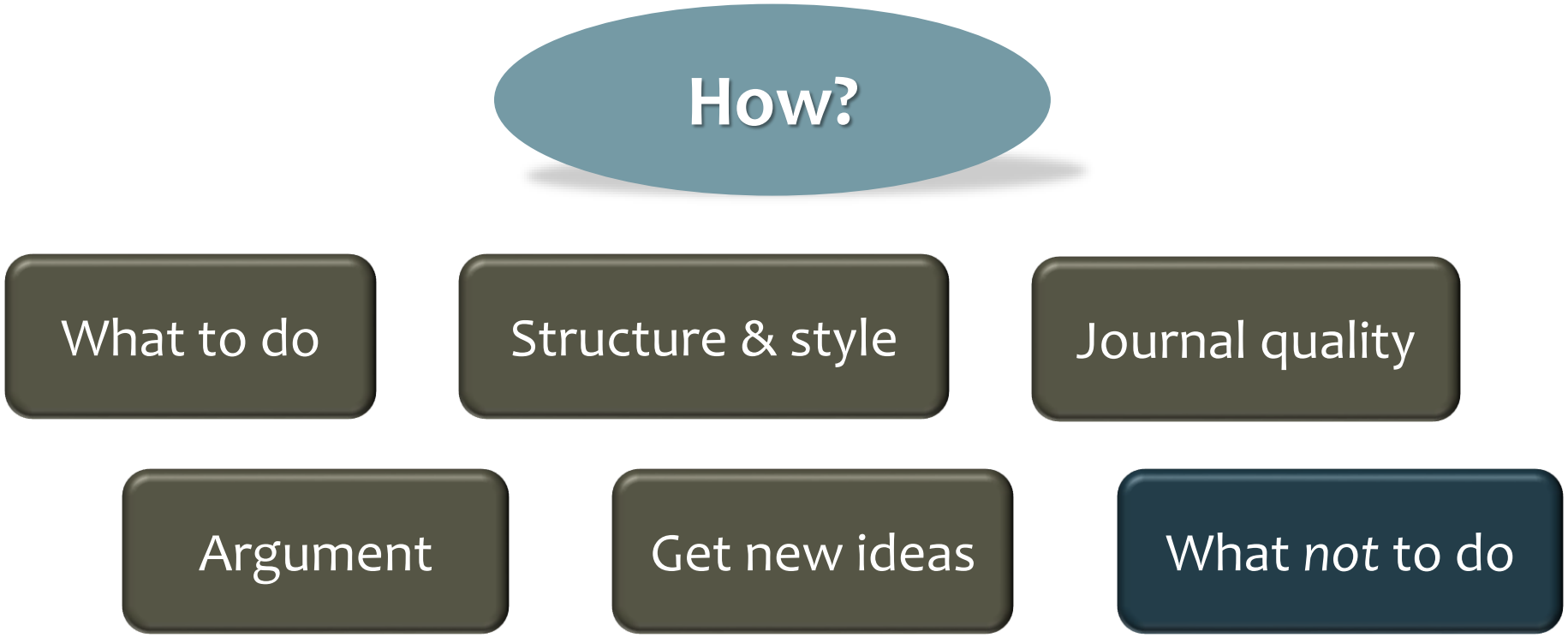
Before you start… Six steps!

- Think about **why** you want to publish your work, and **whether** it's publishable
- Decide what **type** of the manuscript to write
- Choose the **target** journal
- Pay attention to journal **requirements** in the Guide for Authors
- Pay attention to the **structure** of the paper
- Understand publication **ethics** to avoid violations

Before you start… Ask yourself "what do Editors want?"



Before you start… Read to improve your writing



Before you start… Qualities of publishable findings

- *New* – **Nobody has published such findings before**

- *Useful* – **Findings have important, practical use, or solve an important problem in the field**

Before you start… Identify hot topics!

Look for clues — unexplained findings, controversies

Read the literature, including related fields

Attend International Conferences & Meetings

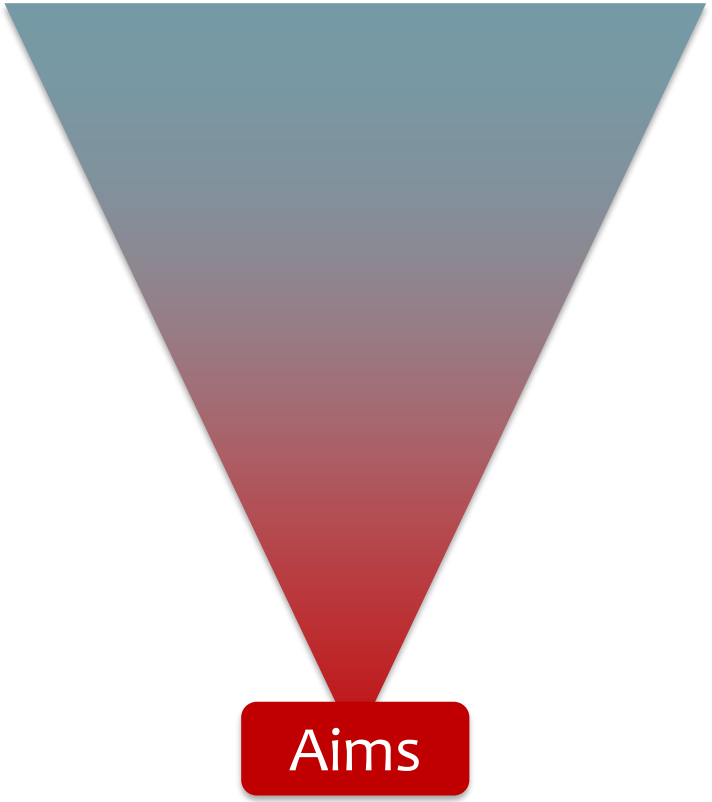
Before you start… Logically organize your ideas

You need to answer *4 key questions* for your readers:

1. *Why* did your study need to be done?	**Introduction**
2. *What* did you do?	**Methods**
3. **What** did you find?	**Results**
4. *How* will your study advance the field?	**Discussion**

Introduction

Why does your study need to be done?



Background information

Worldwide relevance?
Broad/specialized?

What is currently known

Up-to-date
International

Problem in the field

Specific aims

Methods

What did you do?

What/who was used

- **Samples or participants**
- **Materials**
  - *Where purchased*

How it was done

- **General methods**
- **Specific techniques**
  - *Discuss controls*

How it was analyzed

- **Quantification methods**
- **Statistical tests**
  - *Consult a statistician*

Results

What did you find?

Logical presentation

1. Initial observation
2. Characterization
3. Application

Example:

1. Fabricate new membrane for water treatment
2. Evaluate physical and chemical properties (e.g., under different temperatures/pressures)
3. Efficacy in removing particulate contamination

Results

What did you find?

Logical presentation

1. Initial observation
2. Characterization
3. Application

Subsections

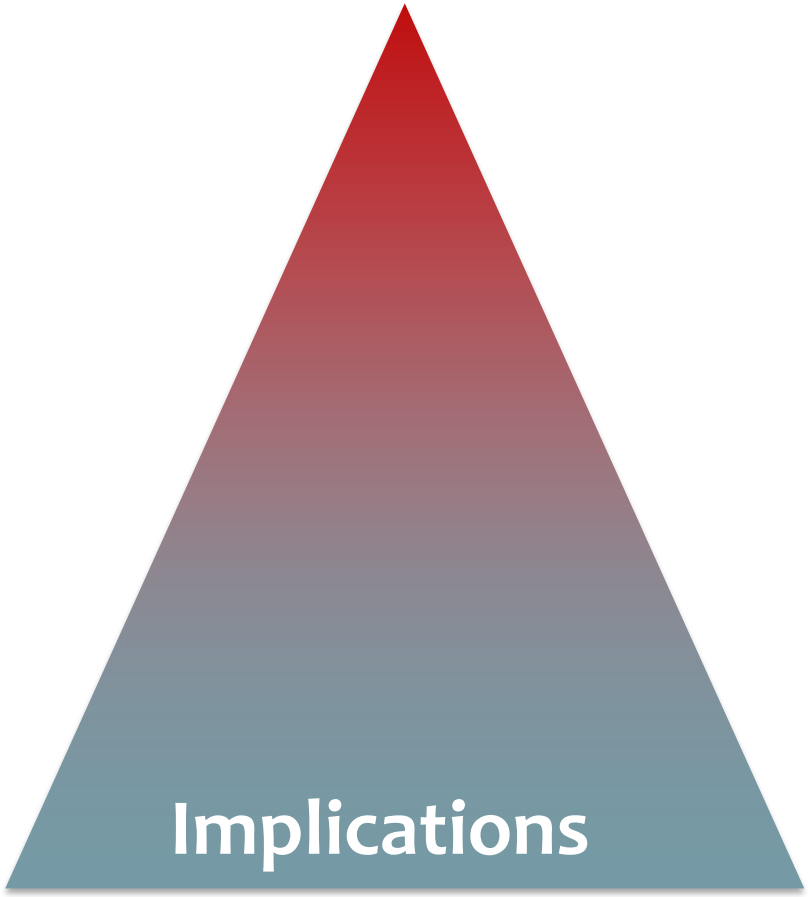
Each subsection corresponds to *one* figure

Factual description

What you found, *not* what it means

Discussion

How your study contributes to the field?



Summary of findings

Relevance

Similarities/differences
Unexpected/negative results
Limitations

Conclusion

Discussion

Strong conclusions… *What do you want your readers to remember about your study?*

In conclusion, polymeric nanoparticles could be used as a generic carrier of hydrophobic drugs for efficient delivery. Compared with drug administration alone, these nanoparticles mediated a higher and more rapid uptake of the encapsulated drug by nanoparticle-cell contact-mediated transfer. A contact-mediated mechanism of delivery into the cytosol could enable effective delivery of anticancer drugs directly to the intracellular molecular targets. Further understanding of this contact-based transfer mechanism will be important to exploit this novel delivery system for the administration of hydrophobic chemotherapeutic drugs to improve cancer therapy.

Modified from: Snipstad et al. Cancer Nanotech. 2014; 5: 8.

Discussion

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Conclusion

Key finding

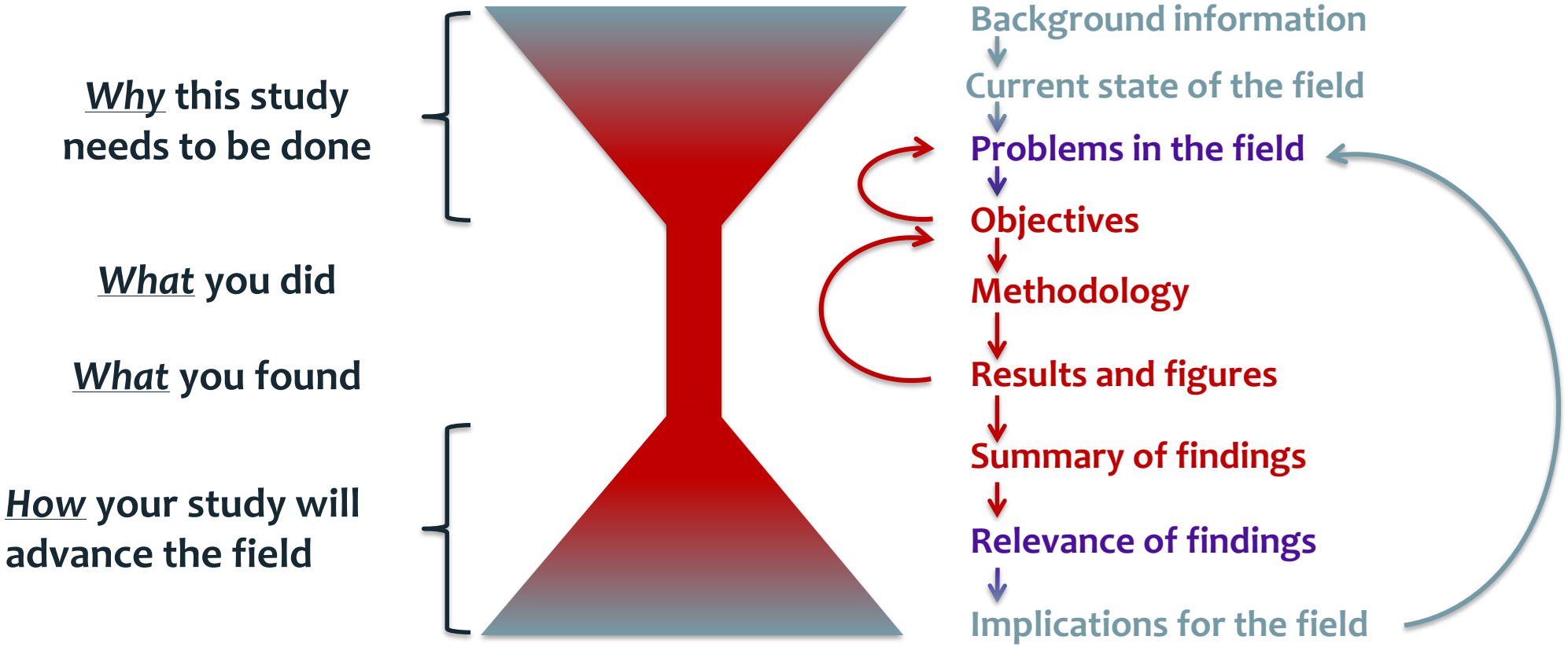
Implications

Future directions

Modified from: Snipstad et al. Cancer Nanotech. 2014; 5: 8.

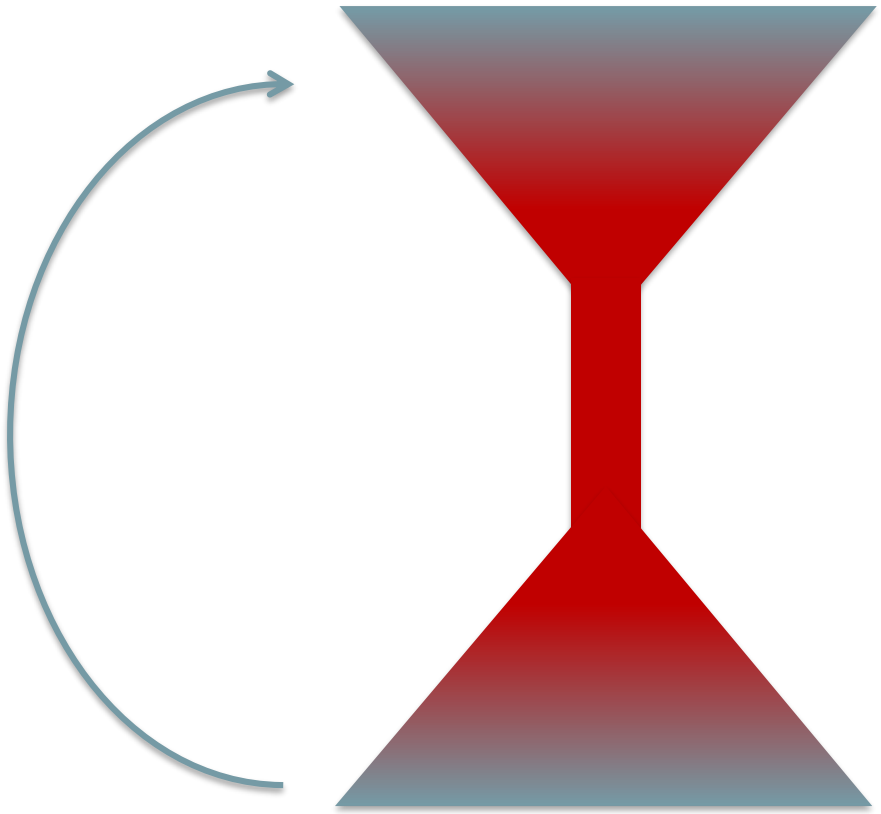
Linking your ideas

Answer the *four key questions* for your reader



Logically link your ideas throughout your manuscript

Research cycle and Necessity to publish



Scientist as user of scientific information

Scientist as creator of scientific information

Who is hungry?

First impressions are important!

First impression!

✓You only get one chance to make a good first impression

Bill Gates

✓If you can't make it good, at least make it look good

Title – First impression of your paper

Keywords

Summary of your study = Title

Abstract – First impression of your paper

Aims	***Importance*** of your topic
Results	***Significance*** of your study
Conclusions	***Relevance*** of your study

Clarity of your writing

Abstract – First impression of your paper

Concise summary of your paper

Background	→	Why the study was done
Aims	→	Your objectives
Methods	→	Techniques/analyses
Results	→	Most important findings
Conclusion	→	Conclusion/implications

Abstract – First impression of your paper

In the Tahe oilfield in China, heavy oil is commonly lifted using the light oil blending technology. However, due to the lack of light oil, the production of heavy oil has been seriously limited. Here, we aimed to reduce light oil usage and maintain heavy oil production using a new compound technology of light oil blending and electric heating. We developed a pressure and temperature coupling model based on mass, momentum and energy conservation. The heat-transfer parameters and pressure drop are calculated by using the Hasan–Kabir and Hagedorn–Brown methods, respectively. This model also considers the effects of blending light and heavy oils as well as heating the electric rods. Our calculations demonstrate that electric heating coupled with light oil blending is much more effective than either alone. In conclusion, our study shows that the amount of light oil used can be reduced by combining the electric heating technology. This novel method should improve heavy oil production in regions lacking light oil.

Modified from: Zhu et al. J Petrol Explor Prod Technol. 2014; DOI: 10.1007/s13202-014-0126-x.

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Why **study needs to be done**

What **you did**

What **you found**

How **study contributes to the field**

Modified from: Zhu et al. J Petrol Explor Prod Technol. 2014; DOI: 10.1007/s13202-014-0126-x.

How to choose your target journal?

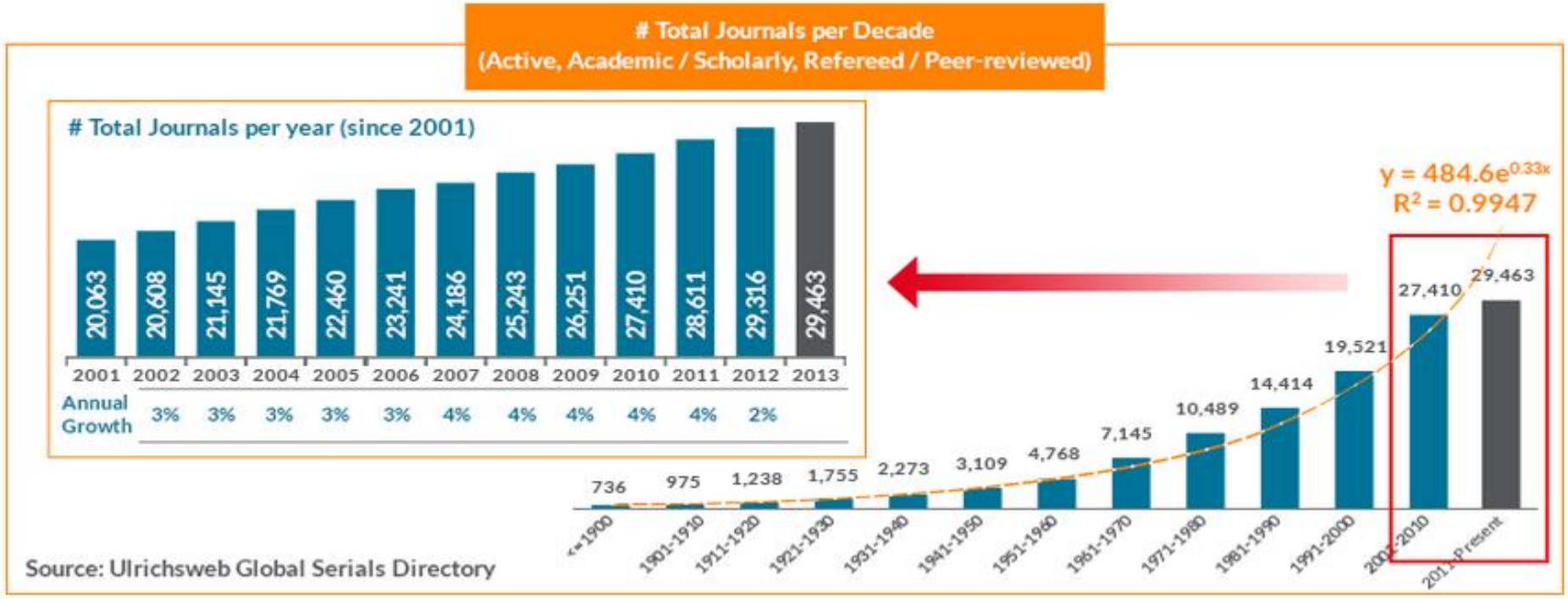
4.0

Finding the right journal

How many journals are there?

Total journals

>30,000



Finding the right journal

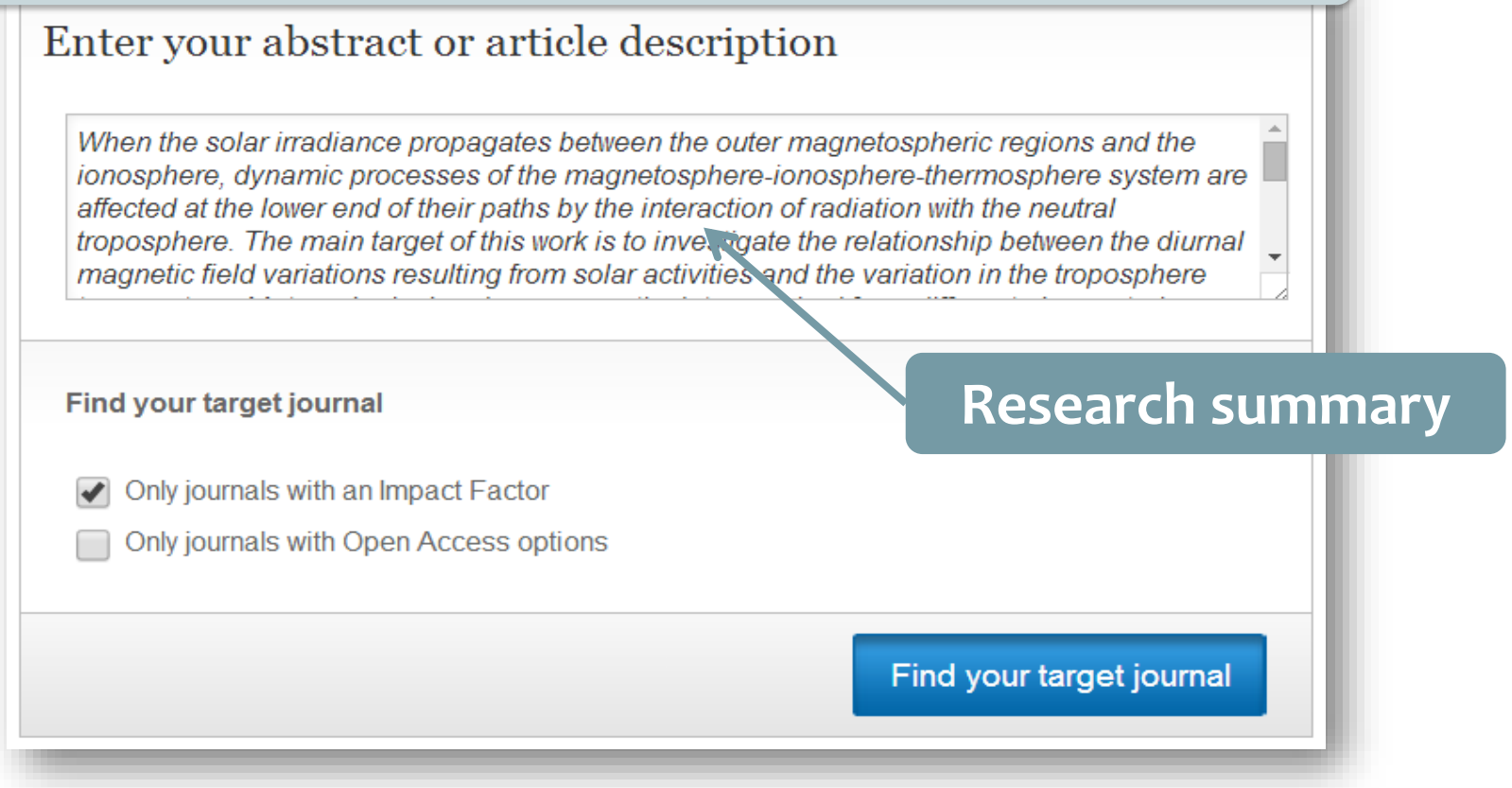
How many journals are there?

1. DOAJ.org (accessed 29/5/15)
2. http://ip-science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jlresults.cgi?PC=D (accessed 29/5/15)

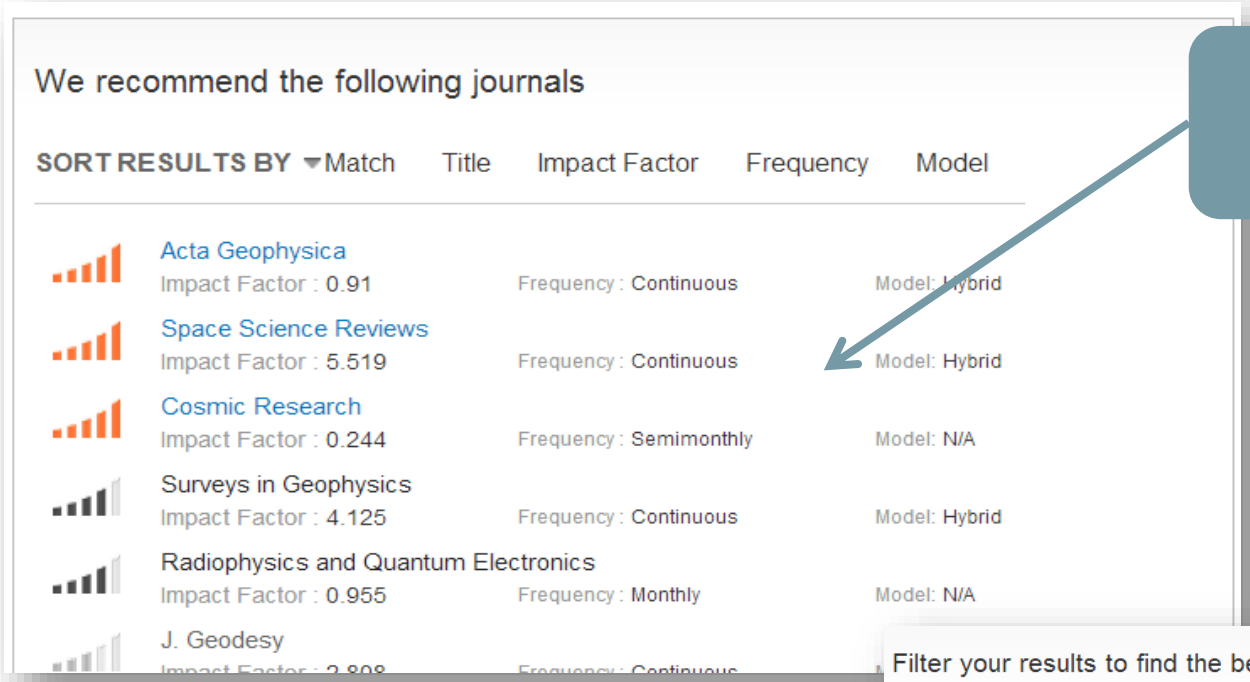
Springer Journal Selector

A free online tool to find suitable journals for your manuscript

LINK => https://journalsuggester.springer.com



Springer Journal Selector



Recommended journals

Filter by:

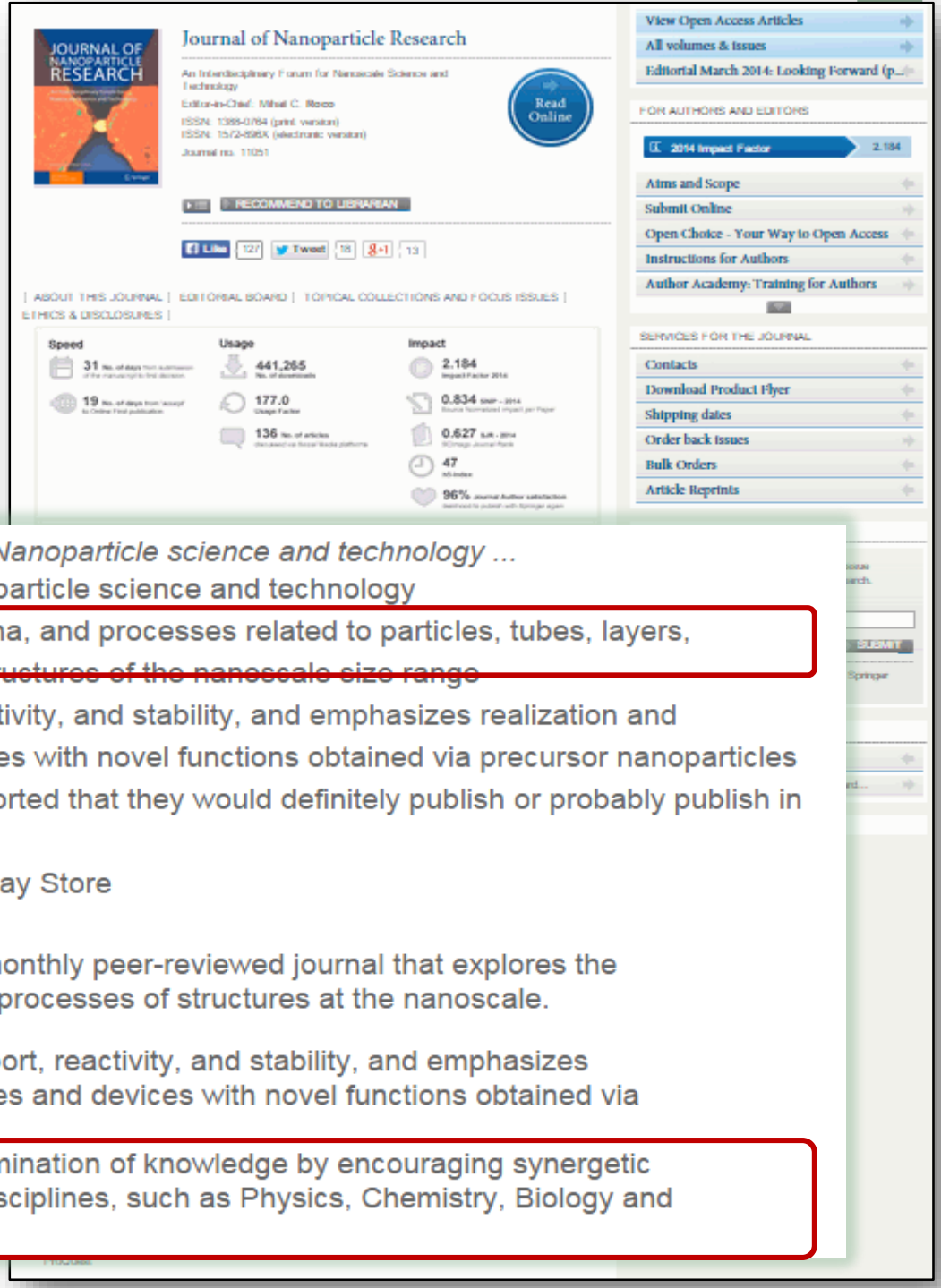
- Impact factor
- Publishing frequency
- Open access

Springer Journal Selector

Factors to consider

Aims and scope

Readership



... The first interdisciplinary journal devoted to Nanoparticle science and technology ...

- An interdisciplinary journal devoted to Nanoparticle science and technology
- Focuses on concepts, properties, phenomena, and processes related to particles, tubes, layers, macromolecules, clusters and other finite structures of the nanoscale size range
- Covers synthesis, assembly, transport, reactivity, and stability, and emphasizes realization and application of systems, structures and devices with novel functions obtained via precursor nanoparticles
- 96% of authors who answered a survey reported that they would definitely publish or probably publish in the journal again
- Free app available on iTunes and Google Play Store

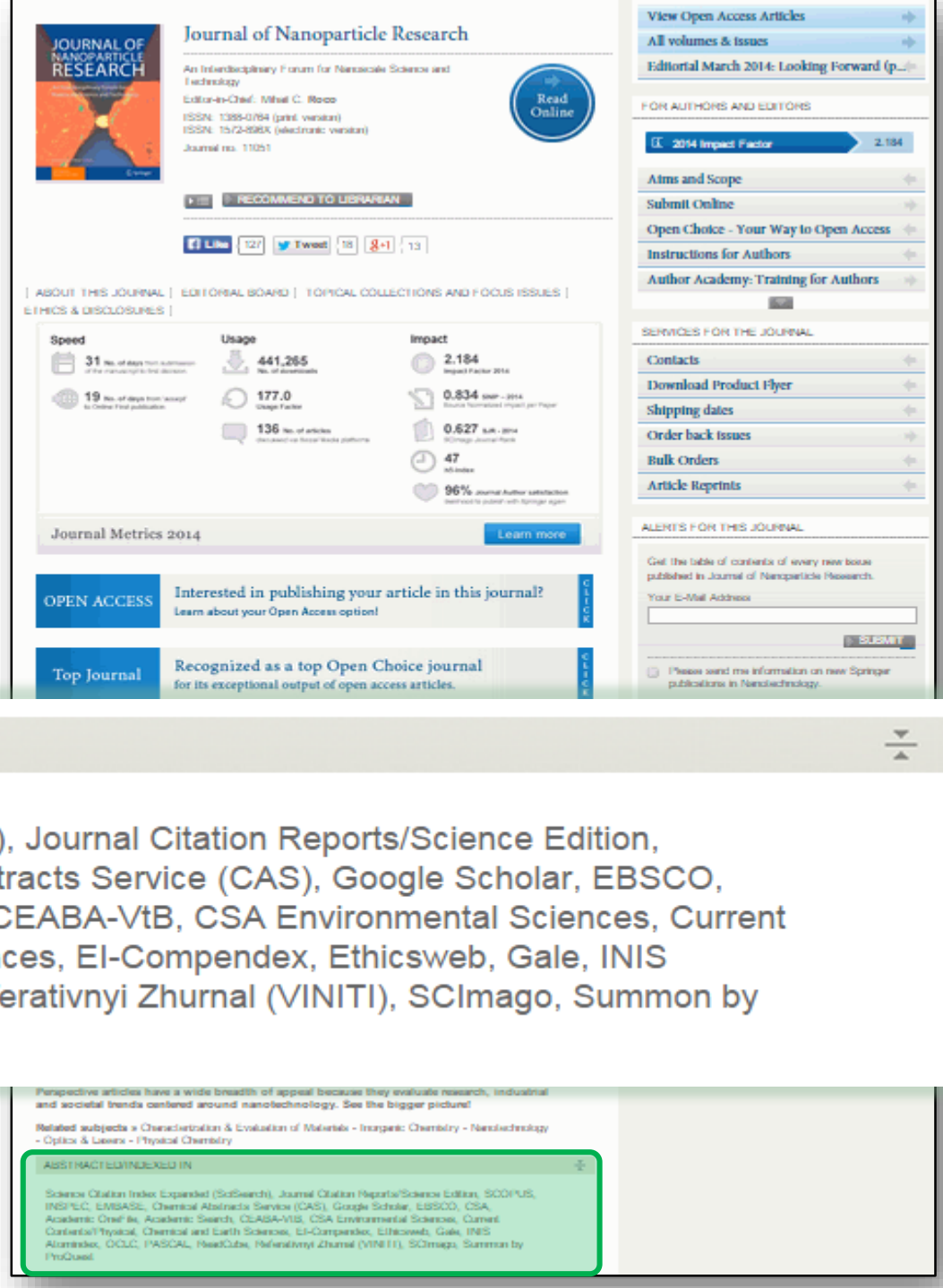
The **Journal of Nanoparticle Research** is a monthly peer-reviewed journal that explores the specific concepts, properties, phenomena and processes of structures at the nanoscale.

Coverage includes synthesis, assembly, transport, reactivity, and stability, and emphasizes realization and application of systems, structures and devices with novel functions obtained via precursor nanoparticles.

The **Journal** fosters the interdisciplinary dissemination of knowledge by encouraging synergetic approaches originating from a wide range of disciplines, such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Health Care.

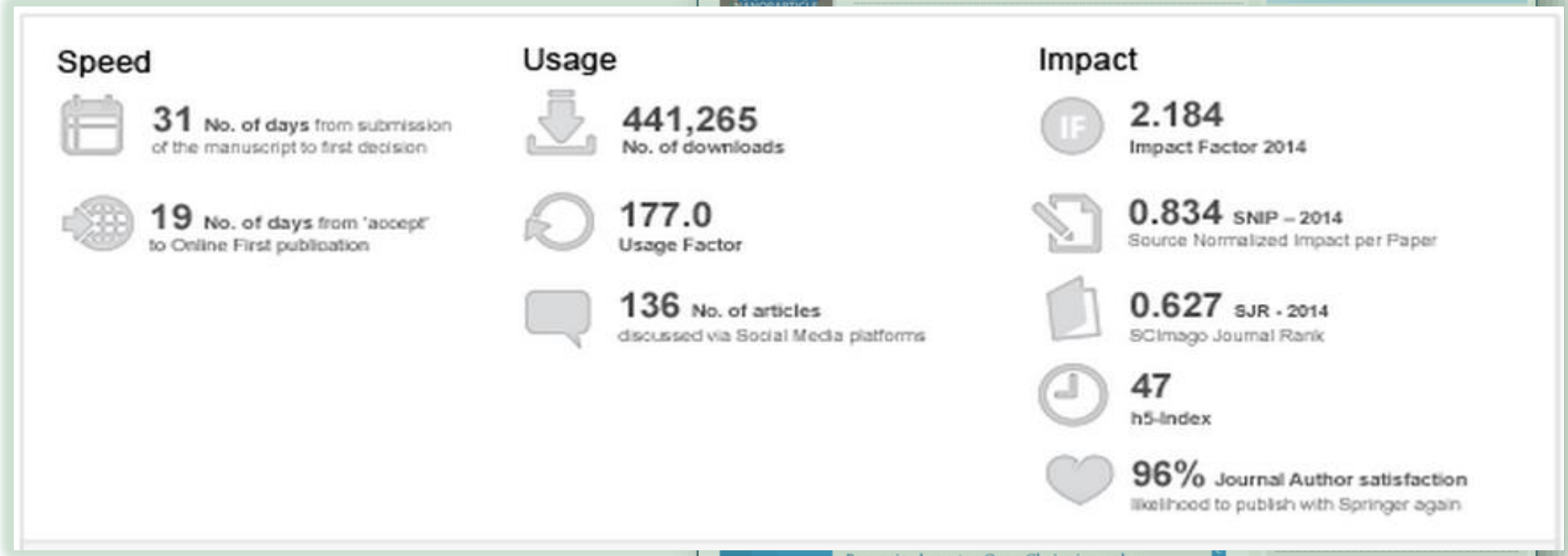
Factors to consider

- Aims and scope
- Readership
- Indexing



ABSTRACTED/INDEXED IN

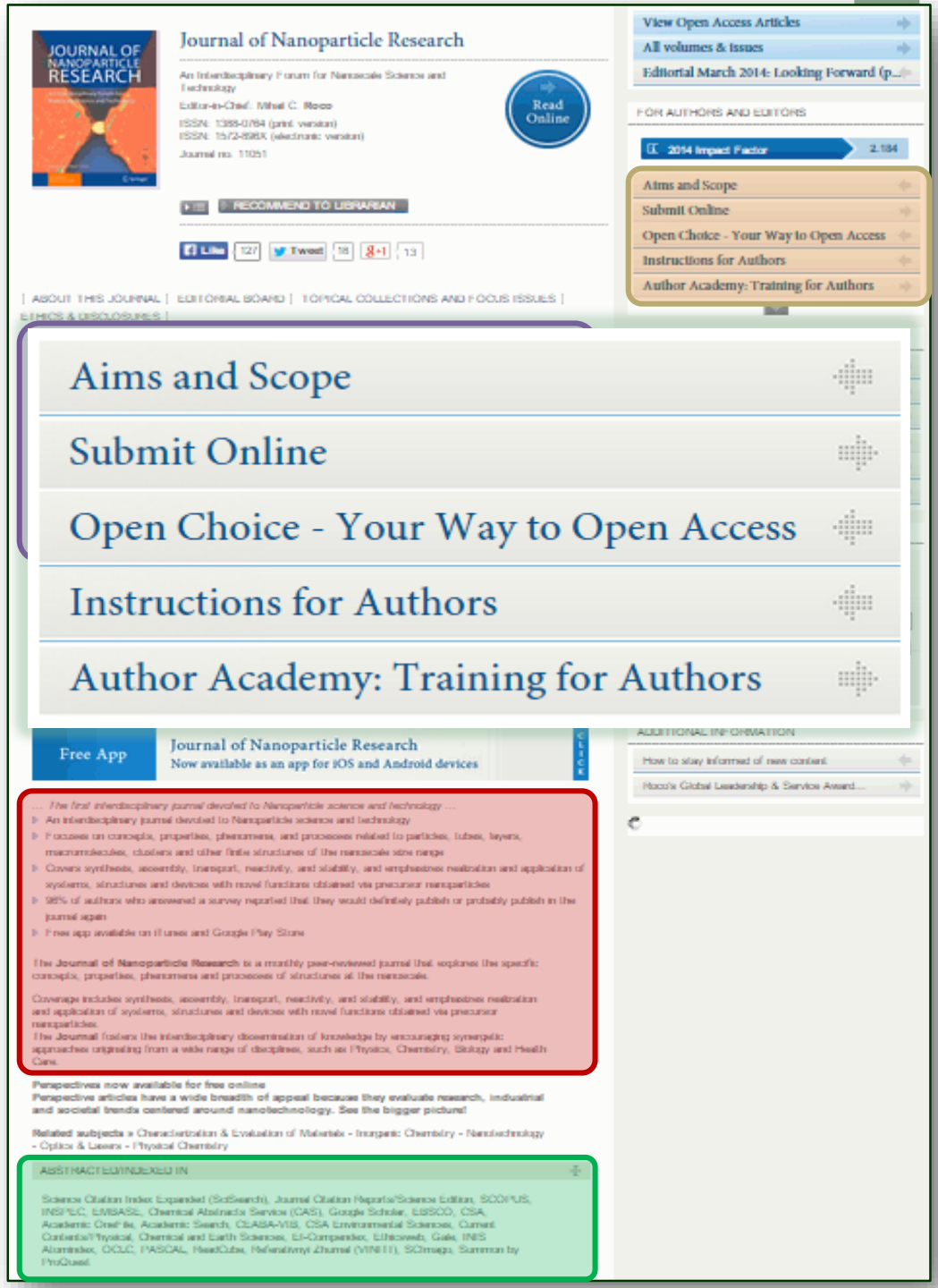
Science Citation Index Expanded (SciSearch), Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, SCOPUS, INSPEC, EMBASE, Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), Google Scholar, EBSCO, CSA, Academic OneFile, Academic Search, CEABA-VtB, CSA Environmental Sciences, Current Contents/Physical, Chemical and Earth Sciences, EI-Compendex, Ethicsweb, Gale, INIS Atomindex, OCLC, PASCAL, ReadCube, Referativnyi Zhurnal (VINITI), SCImago, Summon by ProQuest


Speed
31 No. of days from submission of the manuscript to first decision
19 No. of days from 'accept' to Online First publication
Usage
441,265 No. of downloads
177.0 Usage Factor
136 No. of articles discussed via Social Media platforms
Impact
2.184 Impact Factor 2014
0.834 SNIP – 2014 Source Normalized Impact per Paper
0.627 SJR - 2014 SCImago Journal Rank
47 h5-Index
96% Journal Author satisfaction likelihood to publish with Springer again

Metrics

Factors to consider

- Aims and scope
- Readership
- Indexing
- Metrics
- Author guides



Factors to consider

- Aims and scope
- Indexing
- Metrics
- Author guides
- Open access
- Impact factor

Factors to consider

- Aims and scope
- Readership
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- Impact factor

Choose your journal before writing your manuscript

Author guidelines

- Manuscript structure
- Word limits
- Reference style

Aims and scope

- Topics
- Readership
- Be sure to *emphasize*

Relevant references

Writing style

But *after* evaluating the ***novelty*** and ***relevance*** of your findings

Submitting your manuscript

5.0

- ☑ *Appropriate journal*
- ☑ *Logically organized manuscript*
- ☑ *Effective writing (clear, concise)*

Ready to submit!

Journal Editors are busy!

Cover letters – First impressions for Journal Editors

Significance and relevance of study

Suitable to be published by their journal

Interesting to their readers?

Clear and concise writing style?

Write an impressive cover letter

Dear Dr Lippman, → Editor's name

Please find enclosed our manuscript entitled "**Evaluation of the Glasgow prognostic score in patients undergoing curative resection for breast cancer liver metastases,**" which we would like to submit for publication as an Original Article in the *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*.

Manuscript title

Article type

The Glasgow prognostic score (GPS) is of value for a variety of tumours. Several studies have investigated the prognostic value of the GPS in patients with metastatic breast cancer, but few studies have performed such an investigation for patients undergoing liver resection for liver metastases. Furthermore, there are currently no studies that have examined the prognostic value of the modified GPS (mGPS) in these patients. The present study evaluated the mGPS in terms of its prognostic value for postoperative death in patients undergoing liver resection for breast cancer liver metastases.

Give the background to the research

A total of 318 patients with breast cancer liver metastases who underwent hepatectomy over a 15-year period were included in this study. The mGPS was calculated based on the levels of C-reactive protein and albumin, and the disease-free survival and cancer-specific survival rates were evaluated in relation to the mGPS. Prognostic significance was retrospectively analyzed by univariate and multivariate analyses. Overall, the results showed a significant association between cancer-specific survival and the mGPS and carcinoembryonic antigen level, and a higher mGPS was associated with increased aggressiveness of liver recurrence and poorer survival in these patients.

What was done and what was found

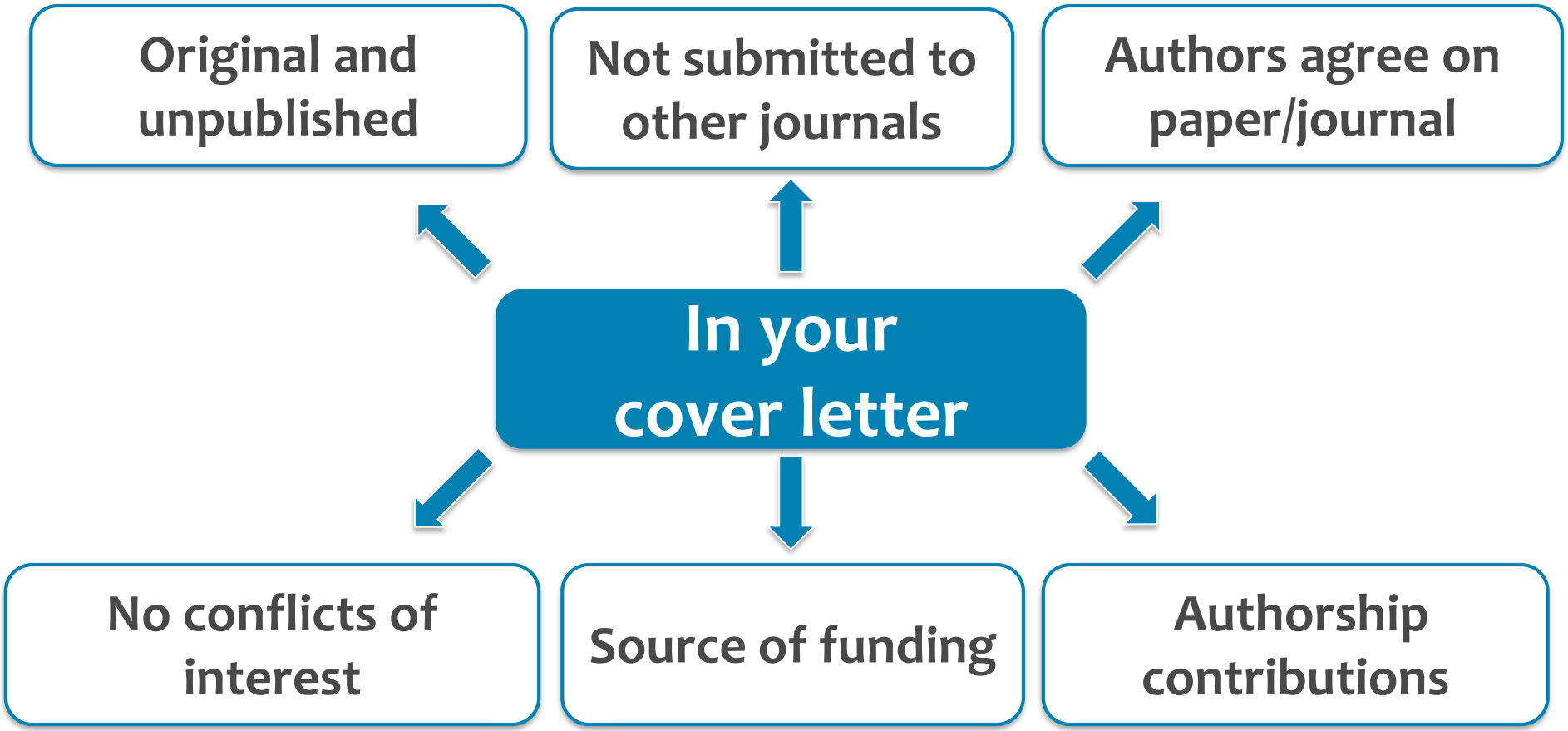
This study is the first to demonstrate that the preoperative mGPS, a simple clinical tool, is a useful prognostic factor for postoperative survival in patients undergoing curative resection for breast cancer liver metastases. This information is immediately clinically applicable for oncologists treating such patients. As a premier journal covering the broad field of cancer, we believe that the *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment* is the perfect platform from which to share our results with the international medical community.

Interest to journal's readers

Recommend and/or exclude reviewers

Publication ethics

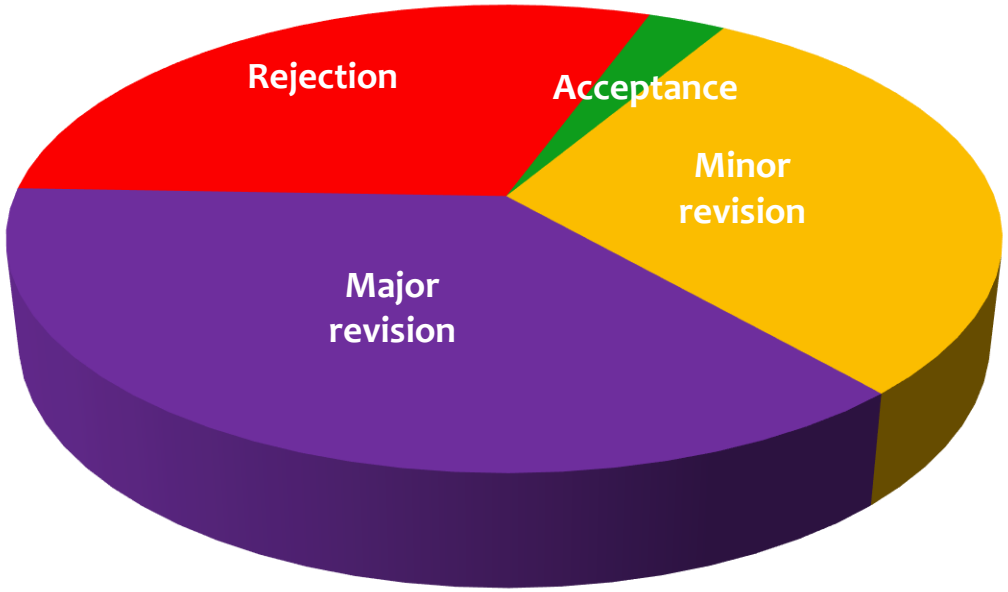
Publishing ethics (read: Springer Editorial Policy)



Read Springer Editorial Policy:
https://www.springer.com/us/editorial-policies

SPRINGER NATURE

Peer review always improves



- ✓ Few papers are accepted without revision
- ✓ Rejection and revision are integral
- ✓ Peer review should be a positive experience

Reviewers

Point-by-point response

Polite & professional

Respond to every comment

Revision

Easy to see changes

- **Refer to line and page numbers**
- **Use a different color font**
- **Highlight the Text**

Point-by-point response

Dear Dr. _____: **[address editor by last name]**

Thank you for your consideration of our manuscript entitled _____ **[insert manuscript title]**. We have reviewed the comments of the reviewers and have thoroughly revised the manuscript. We found the comments helpful, and believe our revised manuscript represents a significant improvement over our initial submission.

In response to the reviewers' suggestions we have **[summarize the key changes here]**

Agreement

Reviewer Comment: *In your analysis of the data you have chosen to use a somewhat obscure fitting function (regression). In my opinion, a simple Gaussian function would have sufficed. Moreover, the results would be more instructive and easier to compare to previous results.*

Response: **We agree with the reviewer's assessment of the analysis.** Our tailored function makes it impossible to fully interpret the data in terms of the prevailing theories. In addition, in its current form it would be difficult to tell that this measurement constitutes a significant improvement over previously reported values. **We have redone the analysis using a Gaussian fitting function.**

Disagreement

Reviewer Comment: *In your analysis of the data you have chosen to use a somewhat obscure fitting function (regression). In my opinion, a simple Gaussian function would have sufficed. Moreover, the results would be more instructive and easier to compare to previous results.*

Response: **We agree with the reviewer that a simple Gaussian fit would facilitate comparison with the results of other studies.** ***However***, our tailored function allows for the analysis of the data in terms of the Smith model [Smith et al, 1998]. **We have added two sentences to the paper (page 3 paragraph 2) to explain the use of this function and Smith's model.**

Understanding reviewer comments

“The English needs to be improved”

“Your writing is difficult to understand”

Grammar & Spelling

Long, complex sentences and paragraphs

Gaps in the logic

Poor manuscript organization

Too much information

Revision

Conduct additional experiments and analyses as suggested

✓ *If this is impossible, you must explain why*

You *can* disagree with reviewers, but provide evidence

✓ *Cite published work*

Comply with deadlines

✓ *Extensions are granted*

Rejection… reasons?

Inappropriate journal selected

Unlucky timing

Rejection… the content?

Incomplete data

Inappropriate methodology

Weak research motivation

Poor analysis

Inaccurate conclusions

Rejection… the manuscript?

- Journal requirements not met
- Lack of detail
- Publication ethics ignored
- Inappropriate data presentation
- Poor grammar and style
- A well-written cover letter missing?

Summary of Today's Presentation

Six steps before writing your manuscript:

- Think about **why** you want to publish your work, and **whether** it's publishable
- Decide what **type** of the manuscript to write
- Choose the **target** journal
- Pay attention to journal **requirements** in the Guide for Authors
- Pay attention to the **structure** of the paper
- Understand publication **ethics** to avoid violations

Answer four key questions when writing your manuscript:

- **Why** this study needs to be done? **INTRODUCTION**
- **What** you did? **METHODS**
- **What** you found? **RESULTS**
- **How** your study will advance the field – Implications? **DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS**

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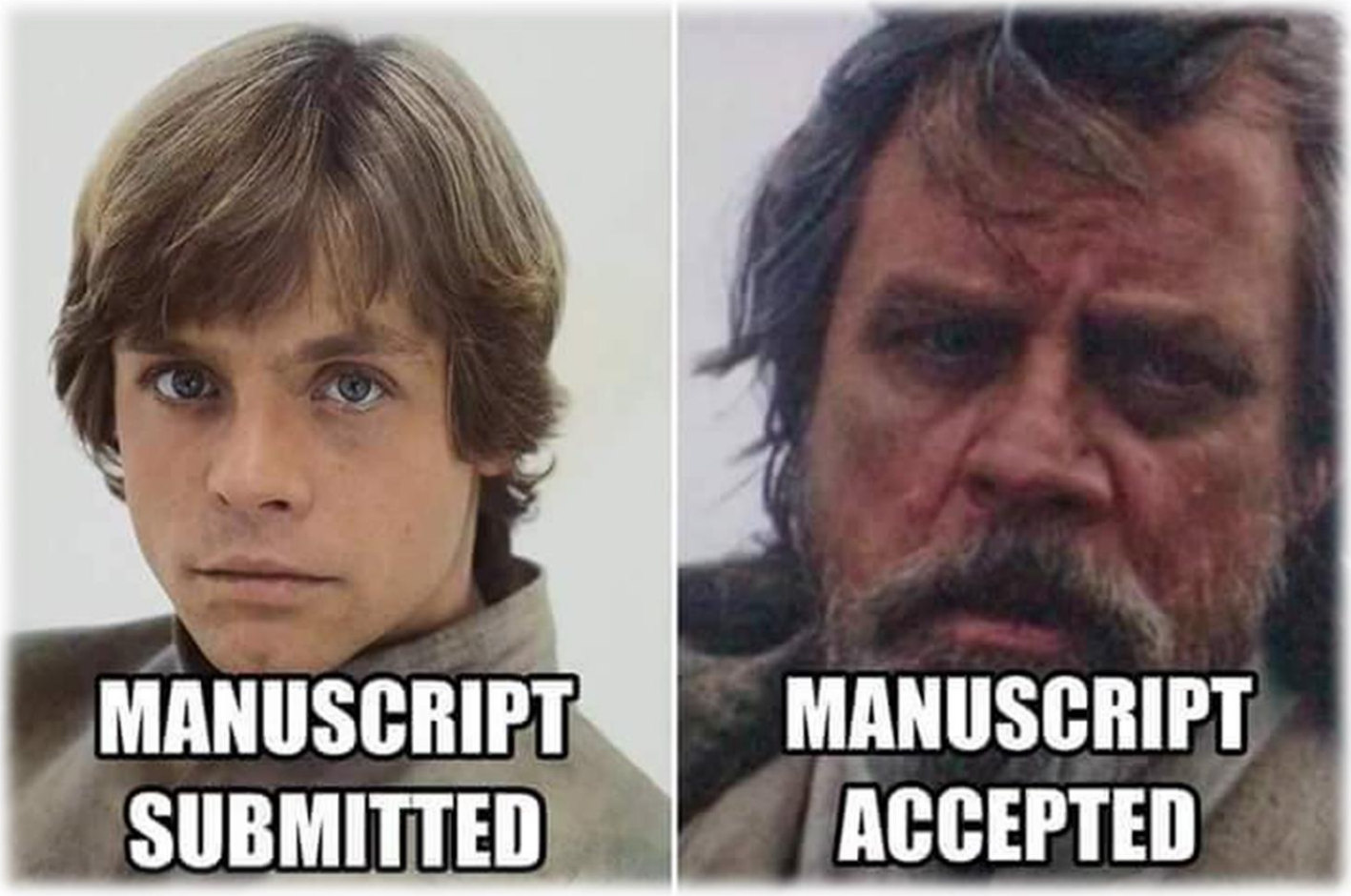

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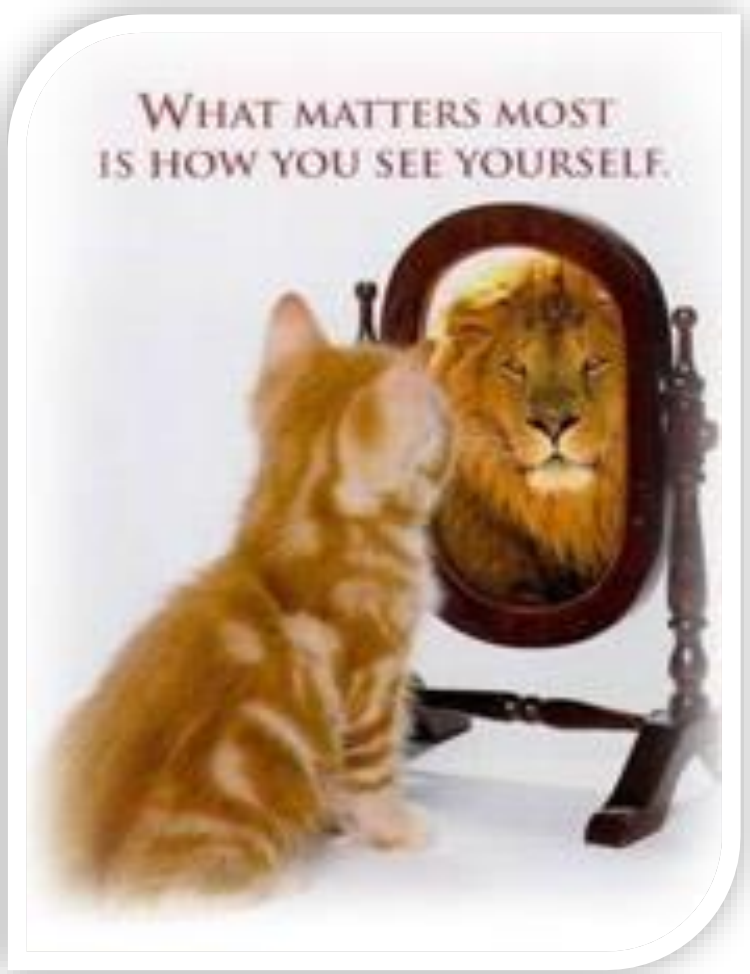

Journals… I am managing!

3 Biotech

Applied Nanoscience

Applied Petrochemical Research

Applied Water Science

Arabian Journal for Science and Engineering

Arabian Journal of Geosciences

Arabian Journal of Mathematics

arktos: Journal of Arctic Geosciences

Chemistry Africa

Complex & Intelligent Systems

Earth Systems and Environment

Emergent Materials

Energy Transitions

Euro-Mediterranean Journal for Environmental Integration

Innovative Infrastructure Solutions

Journal of Petroleum Exploration and Production Technology

Materials for Renewable and Sustainable Energy

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Thank you…

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