



## Finding the Right Journal to Disseminate Your Research

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Productive scientists are also writers who, at once, communicate with each other and create the scientific record through publication in peer-reviewed journals. The purpose of this article is to describe “Steps to Success” in finding the right journal to disseminate your research.

### *Characterize Your Work*

Classify your article by topic, type of article, and intended readership. In nursing science—the science of health—topics can be described in many ways: health or illness, prevention or treatment, young or old, special groups or populations, over time, or in context. Manuscripts may report original research (observational or experimental; qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), systematic reviews, meta-analyses or meta-syntheses, clinical guidelines or implications, or case reports. Depending on the topic, approach, or level of development of the area of research, the primary readership may be other researchers, clinicians, policy makers, and/or educators. Characterization by topic, type of article, and intended readership creates a template for matching your work with the editorial missions of journals.

### *Survey Journals and Their Editorial Missions*

Check out the nursing journals directory on the Web site of the International Academy of Nursing Editors: [www.nursingeditors.com](http://www.nursingeditors.com). Visit candidate journal Web sites to read “About” the journals. Peruse recent Tables of Contents for candidate journals; subscribe (for free) to eTOCS of research and clinical journals in nursing to keep your finger on the pulse of breaking issues and priorities for publication. Read editorials so that you’re aware of editor perspectives and guidance on topics, such as review articles<sup>1</sup>, reporting guidelines<sup>2</sup>, and methods.<sup>3</sup> Be alert to calls for articles and ongoing series; know that some journals publish topical issues that are announced in advance along with firm deadlines for submission. Be aware of special requirements; for example, some journals (like *Nursing Research*) expect that clinical trials be registered in advance of data collection and recommend registration of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. (Select the “For Authors and Reviewers” tab at [www.nursingresearchonline.com](http://www.nursingresearchonline.com) for more information.)

### *Consider Additional Journal Characteristics*

Author-investigators naturally want to publish their papers in influential journals that will reach the intended readership—thus, journal reputation and a tradition of quality matter. Journal metrics such as impact factor, 5-year impact factor, and cited half-life of published articles and article-level altmetrics—like use of articles (page views, downloads)—can be useful in deciding if a journal is right for your work. Circulation information gives you an idea about how many readers will be reached: individual

subscribers (including members of societies who receive journal subscriptions as a membership benefit) are dedicated readers; institutional subscribers provide access to the wider community of scientists. Quality of the peer review process, clear editorial correspondence, and fairness in editorial decision making should be considered. Find out about availability of special features like color, supplemental digital content, and posting on PubMed. (At the discretion of the Editor, *Nursing Research* now publishes a limited number of color pages in each issue at no cost to authors.) Publication models are changing fast—“classical” free to publish, pay to read; “open” pay to publish, free to read; and hybrid models are now used<sup>4</sup>; availability of the model of your preference may influence your choice of journal.

### **Contact Editors**

Communicate with the editor before submission. Say that you are writing to ask about a potential submission and describe your proposed paper by topic and type of paper. Provide an abstract. Explain why you think your paper is a match for the journal. Be sure to ask questions you have about suitability of the manuscript for the journal, the peer review process, or other concerns. Keep in mind that e-mail is professional correspondence; both overly formal language and undue casualness should be avoided—write comfortably as you describe your work and ask your questions. To appreciate the response you receive, understand the key responsibilities that editors hold: selecting content, managing peer review, overseeing the editorial office, and ensuring integrity of the scientific record.

### **Proceed With Submission**

Use the information you obtained. Submit your paper to the journal at the top of your “short list” of candidates best matched to your work. Prepare your paper carefully so that it showcases the important work you have done, engages with current communication in nursing science, and contributes to the scientific record of the discipline.

### **References**

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