

Editorial

So you want to be UMJ editor

Dr John Purvis

I'm getting close to the end of my five-year term of office as Editor of UMJ and just like my predecessors, I find myself reflecting on the last few years.

As I search for a successor, I thought it would be useful to outline just what the job involves.

The first requirement is that the Editor of the Ulster Medical Journal should be a member of the Ulster Medical Society. Beyond that, a certain degree of seniority – either Consultant or Principal in practice is required along with familiarity with the process of writing and submitting articles for publication in medical journals. Experience of refereeing for a peer-reviewed journal is also important.

In terms of the workflow for a selected manuscript, my first step is to acknowledge submission by email to the author and then log the manuscript into the UMJ office. I then need to check that it's in a suitable format for UMJ – the commonest problems that arise are length (for a Clinical Paper, about 2500 words is about right) and correct formatting of references – UMJ uses American Medical Association formatting, for example: *this was confirmed in 3 major studies.*^{1,2,3}

It's also very important that I check that the work is original – although authors are required to sign a letter in PDF format stating that the work has not been submitted or published elsewhere, I did run across one case report submitted to UMJ that had been published word for word in an Internet only, “pay per publish” Journal. That manuscript was immediately rejected. I then discussed the incident with the Committee for Publishing Ethics (CoPE) and followed their recommendations about how to deal with the authors.

Unfortunately, many trainees are tempted by the prospect of guaranteed publication on the Internet for the cost of a few hundred pounds. The peer review process in these “Journals” is a sham and usually disguised as “rapid review guaranteed”. Lists of such “Predatory Publishers” can readily be found on the Internet – the most famous is Beall's List - avoid any Journals mentioned in such a list. Job interviewers – please check through the publications on a candidate's CV for such “pay per publish” titles!

There also seems to be an increasing tendency for authors to submit “draft versions” of manuscripts and ask for my “feedback” before submitting. Unlike the editor of a novel or the copy editor of a newspaper article, it's not my job to write or correct the manuscript for you prior to submission – I will usually comment helpfully once when I receive such a request but if you submit again asking for further “feedback”, I will

just go ahead and send the paper out for review with referee. If the referee's decision is Reject due to poor readability or multiple grammatical problems, that's not my problem.

Similarly, authors sometimes ask if UMJ is “interested” in receiving a particular manuscript. I must admit, I struggle with giving a straight answer to this in case it is perceived as an offer of acceptance to publish. I usually reply that as a peer-reviewed journal, acceptance and interest depends on a positive outcome from referee.

After these preliminary checks, I need to find a Referee to review the paper. Sometimes, I can immediately think of a suitable individual but sometimes, for highly specialised areas, I need to either ask advice from friends or ask the authors to provide a list of suitable referees. UMJ offers CPD points to referees which is a good help in finding and retaining suitable candidates.

We allow one month for the referee to submit their report but sometimes, it takes longer and rarely, I have to abandon a referee who has initially agreed to review a paper but then doesn't respond at all. I then have to start from scratch, find a new referee and wait a further month. That frustrates not only me but also the authors who are waiting to hear the outcome.

Rejected papers are dismissed whilst papers that are accepted, often go back to the authors for any corrections or modifications suggested by the referee. This phase also lasts one month.

After this, the modified manuscript goes to our subeditor, Mrs Mary Crickard, for reference checks – most people do a fairly good job with references but occasionally, Mary detects a major problem which requires correction before the article can proceed further.

The next stage is preparation of proofs with our printer, Dorman and Sons. The printer is excellent (my contact at Dormans is Mr Peter Mahaffey) and always very prompt so it's not long before I can send the proofs back to the authors for final checks. We only allow one round of checks in quite a short timeframe so that a finalised version is agreed very quickly. I don't want to receive corrections just before (or after) publication date!

We publish 3 times a year, so I need sufficient content to create a Table of Contents for each edition. We have been fortunate in recent years to receive good numbers of manuscripts, so I am often well ahead in terms of planning out content and don't feel any pressure to accept poor quality manuscripts.



PDF files of each part of the journal are sent after print publication to the UMS website and also go to PubMed Central where the Journal is indexed. The latter is quite a complicated process because the text needs to undergo conversion to a tagged programming language called Extended Markup Language (XML). A third-party company called Charlesworth does this for us and then forwards the results to PubMed Central. XML is the code used by search engines to retrieve author and title keywords.

Each edition of the Journal costs about £4000 and the money to support this comes directly from the Ulster Medical Society. Although the Society foots the bill, the editor has independence from the Society and has freedom to publish what he or she sees fit.

The Editor sits on the UMS Council and prepares a yearly report on UMJ activity for the AGM. The Editor is directly responsible to the Editorial Board of the UMJ which meets twice yearly.

I work directly with an Editorial Assistant, Mrs Kathy Clarke, who responds to e-mails, keeps my diary for UMJ and generally keeps me in order!

How much of my time does this take? About two hours a week on average, probably three closer to publication dates.

How much IT do I know? Just general familiarity with Word and Powerpoint. I use Microsoft OneNote as an electronic ring-file to keep track of submissions and Tables of Contents. I use a very simple FTP client to transfer files to Charlesworth and PubMed Central. XML is completely beyond me but Charlesworth deals with that.

What have I enjoyed doing this? I think its important that trainees learn how to write and submit to medical journals and the big publishing houses won't take the time to give helpful responses – I will, within the limits outlined above so I hope I'm contributing to the future development of key papers from NI authors.

So, if you want to be UMJ editor, please do get in touch!



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Ulster Medical Society Programme 2019-2020

Day and Date	Lecture	Subject	Venue	Time
Thursday 3 rd October, 2019	Presidential address	Prof Mary F McMullin <i>'Diagnostics in the Future'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 17 th October, 2019	UMS/QUB/NIMDTA Trainee research day	Prof Fionnuala Ní Áinle, Dublin <i>'The patient voice in collaborative academic research'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	09.00-16.00 hrs
Thursday 7 th November, 2019	UMS The Robert Campbell Oration	Prof Cecilia O'Kane, QUB <i>'Advanced therapeutics for the acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 14 th November, 2019	Joint meeting with Belfast City Hospital Medical Staff	Prof Dr Jörg Goldhahn, Institute of Translational Medicine, Zurich <i>'Artificial intelligence will make doctors obsolete?'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 28 th November, 2019	The Desmond Whyte Lecture	Prof Manuel Salto-Tellez, QUB <i>'The promise and reality of precision medicine in N. Ireland.'</i>	Altnagelvin Centre for Medical and Dental education	Buffet 17.00 hrs Lecture 18.00 hrs
Thursday 12 th December, 2019	UMS	Prof Eileen Murphy, Professor of Archaeology, QUB <i>'Life and Death in Medieval Ireland: Insights from Palaeopathology'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 9 th January, 2020	Joint meeting with Ulster Obs and Gynae Society	Prof Basky Thilaganathan, Prof of Fetal Medicine, London <i>'Preeclampsia is a placental disorder: lies, damn lies and medical science'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 23 rd January, 2020	The Gary Love Lecture Joint meeting with Ulster Society for History Medicine	Dr Harriet Wheelock, Keeper of Collections, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland <i>'Managing the heritage of Irish medicine-tales from the archives'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 6 th February, 2020	UMS	Dr Jyoti Nangalia, Sanger Centre, Cambridge <i>'Towards personalised medicine in blood cancers'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs



Day and Date	Lecture	Subject	Venue	Time
Thursday 27 th February, 2020	UMS	Dr Brenda Moore- McCann, Dublin <i>'Medical Semiotics and its influence on art, psychoanalysis and Sherlock Holmes'</i> and Prof Shaun McCann, Dublin <i>'Microscopes and corkscrews: a future perspective'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 5 th March, 2020	Joint meeting with Belfast City Hospital Medical Staff	Prof Ann Mullally, Harvard, USA <i>'The Physician-Scientist: Rewards and Challenges. A Personal Perspective'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Thursday 19 th March, 2020	UMS Sir Thomas and Lady Edith Dixon Lecture	Professor Irene Roberts, University of Oxford <i>'GATA1, trisomy 21 and leukaemia- unravelling the link'</i>	BCH Postgrad Centre	20.00 hrs
Friday 3 rd April, 2020	UMS	Annual Dinner	Canada Room QUB	19.30 for 20.00 hrs
Thursday 7 th May, 2020	UMS	Annual General Meeting	UMS Rooms, Whitla Medical Building	17.00 hrs





Research for Clinicians



“How to get started and then keep going!”

Thursday 17 October 2019

Postgraduate Centre, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast HSC Trust

Approved for 5 CPD credits: RCP code 125388

08.30 – 09.00	Registration	
09.00 – 09.15	Welcome	Professor Pascal McKeown, Dean, School of Medicine, Dentistry & Biomedical Sciences, Queen’s University Belfast (QUB)
09.15 – 09.30	Why do Research if you want to be a Clinician?	Dr Maurice O’Kane, Director, Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network
09.30 – 09.45	Why do research as a trainee and how it will be part of my career?	Dr Kelly-Ann Eastwood – Academic Clinical Lecturer (Centre for Public Health, QUB) and Obstetrics and Gynaecology Trainee (NIMDTA)
09.45 – 10.00	Research Opportunities in Medical Education	Dr Grainne Kearney, Academic General Practitioner, Centre for Medical Education, QUB
10.00 – 10.15	How can you combine Research and Clinical Work?	Dr Vicky Coyle, Centre for Cancer Research & Cell Biology
10.15 – 10.30	Getting started in research as a trainee	Dr Graeme Greenfield, ICAT Fellow & Specialist Trainee in Haematology
10.30 – 10.45	Clinical Academic Pathways	Professor Peter Maxwell, Director, Clinical Academic Training Programme (QUB & NIMDTA)
10.45 – 11.10	Tea/Coffee and Networking	
11.10 – 12.00	Keynote Address: “The patient voice in collaborative academic research”	Professor Fionnuala Ní Áinle, Consultant Haematologist, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital and Rotunda Hospital, Dublin & University College Dublin School of Medicine
12.00 – 14.00	Lunch (Foyer of Postgraduate Centre)	
12.00 – 13.00	Meet the Researchers, Find out informally how to get research started and keep going (& Eat Lunch!) Opportunities to have brief interviews with QUB Research Centre investigators	<p>Centre for Cancer Research & Cell Biology Dr Vicky Coyle</p> <p>Centre for Medical Education Prof Gerry Gormley</p> <p>Centre for Experimental Medicine Prof Cecilia O’Kane</p> <p>Centre for Public Health Professor Frank Kee</p>



13.00 - 14.00	Moderated Poster Judging	Case Reports & Case Series Quality Improvement Medical Education Research Clinical Research Basic Science Research
14.00 – 14.10	Welcome to Prize Presentations	Professor Mary Frances McMullin President, Ulster Medical Society
14.10 -15.40	Oral Presentations	Chair: Professor Mary Frances McMullin Judges; Dr Aideen Keaney; Professor Peter Maxwell; Professor Keith Gardiner
15.40 – 15.50	Award of Poster Presentation Prizes	Professor Stuart Elborn, Consultant Respiratory Physician and Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science
15.50 – 16.00	Award of Oral Presentation Prize	Professor Stuart Elborn
16.00 – 16.10	Concluding Remarks	Professor Stuart Elborn



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