

## Book reviews

### Getting Research Published – An A to Z of Publication Strategy

Elizabeth Wager, Third Edition, 2016, CRC Press (Taylor & Francis Group), ISBN 978-1-78523-138-4 (Paperback) 29.95 GBP

Like its predecessors (published in 2005 and 2010) this update of Liz Wager's book is presented concisely, pragmatically and with the inimitable down-to-earth and sharp-witted style familiar to many of us.

As a sometime writer/editor/project manager I have to admit that I love this book – it's a one-stop reference goldmine for anyone and everyone working in the world of medical publishing. It's where to find those conventions in publishing that don't seem to be widely reported, and brings together links to all of the resources that one might ever be in need of.

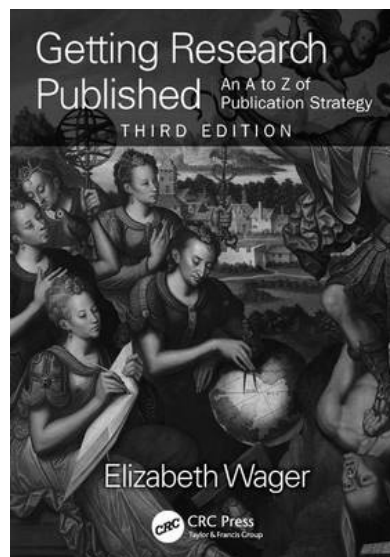
Aimed mainly at researchers wanting to get their research written up and into the literature, it is also useful to those new to the publishing game, for example the young writer starting out in the world of medical communications, and also to those among us who have been here for some time and may be perplexed by the seemingly constant barrage of new guidelines and updates to the more established.

In addition to the now familiar A to Z format, there are several chapters offering useful overviews of publication strategy, including many of the details that often get overlooked in the race to the submission line, and which then cause the whole process to fall over at least temporarily. For instance, the challenges peculiar to publishing results from a multicenter study, and considering subgroup analyses before developing the data analysis plan, rather than having them relegated to the lowly status of post hoc analyses.

The advice on just how long it can take to get from database lock to conference abstract or publication submission has the potential to lessen the inevitable pain/stress involved in any publication endeavour. Taking journal timelines into account – a factor outwith authors'/writers' spheres of influence – and the importance of judicious selection of target journal must not be underestimated. A handy table offers ball-park estimates of time from idea to submission with a useful list of factors that can affect progress.

A particularly topical chapter is that dealing with the often thorny subject of working with medical writers. Wager offers advice on how to make the most of a writer's involvement, while being fully transparent and above and beyond reproach.

Before embarking on an encyclopedic tour of the world of publishing Wager invites us to join her in a fictional tale that could well be subtitled "a comedy of publication errors" offering some light relief from today's highly regulated



world of checklists and regulations. That said, many of us will recognise all too many elements of it, and Part 2 of the book should help us to avoid the many Pitfalls experienced by the fictitious Dr Seymour *et al.*

The 'meat' of this book, then, is the A to Z section, intended as a go-to source for publications queries. It is full of nuggets of advice designed to "avoid delays and nervous breakdowns" that take into consideration the foibles of humanity – for example the tendency of humans under pressure to throw rationality and consideration out of the publication planning decision window.

In keeping with the rapidly changing world of academic publication, several new entries make their debut in this new edition and these will be of particular interest to those who have upgraded (as opposed to buying this title for the first time). The advent of 'cloned journals,' the new offspring of predatory publishers who now, in addition to using titles confusingly similar to those of bona fide journals, have stooped to a new low of producing predatory cloned websites that can be hard to spot. Wager recommends consulting Jeffrey Beall's blog for an up-to-date list of journals that have been 'hijacked'.

Another new entry is the Creative Commons (CC) licence, of which there are several variants enabling compliance with open access requirements while allowing authors to retain the copyright of their own work. This arrangement allows others to reuse and republish – with due acknowledgement – without the need to apply for copyright permission (an often lengthy and expensive process).

Journal cascades and consortia, another relatively new development, and the pros and cons of getting involved with them are discussed. Had I been in possession of this book a year ago, my personal experience with journal cascades might have been better informed and less painful. And, finally, mega journals – those journals that use peer review only to check that the research is sound and reported clearly, but not to judge whether the articles will be of interest to readers (the best known and largest of these is PLOSOne).

To sum up, this book is the source of "Everything You Need to Know About Medical Publishing but Were Afraid to Ask" and could well be one of the best bookshelf investments you make this year.

**Moira A Hudson**  
moirahudson7@gmail.com