

PUBLISHING IN *ACADEMIC MEDICINE*: EDITORS' INSIGHTS AND TIPS FOR SUCCESS, MARCH 31, 2023

A presentation by Bridget O'Brien, PhD, and Colin West, MD, PhD. Both are *Academic Medicine* deputy editors.

What does *Academic Medicine* publish?

There are a variety of ways to get your message out and share ideas and the work you have done. *Academic Medicine* article types include: letters to the editor, commentaries, scholarly perspectives, articles, innovation reports, research reports, humanities features, the AM Last Page, and reviews (systematic, scoping, narrative). Dr. O'Brien noted that the journal is "very open" to qualitative as well as quantitative research.

Read the [Complete Instructions for Authors](#).



What do editors want?

- Significant, clear rationale
- Novel, interesting idea
- Alignment of purpose with rigorous methodology
- Discussion that puts the results or arguments into context
- Likely to be cited based on relevance and quality
- A good fit for the journal / publication
- Well written — work is presented clearly and accurately



What do editors want?

The editors encouraged authors to consider the implications of their work and address what readers should take away from their findings or conclusions.

Dr. O'Brien highlighted the importance using the introduction section to make clear the rationale for why the study or paper is needed.

Dr. West noted the importance of using the discussion section to position how the paper fits in the larger context of the literature on the topic. Don't overlook the limitations, he noted, since without this section "it's not possible to understand how far does this work move us forward and what are its gaps."

What is a good topic?

A good topic should be "relevant, important, well-defined" and something that is either "underrecognized, underappreciated, understudied, or otherwise incompletely understood," said Dr. West. He added that papers should offer a distinct perspective that helps readers think about and reframe an issue that involves or affects academic medicine.

The editors noted that, when reviewing a submission, they will often ask: How does this paper extend or advance what we already know?

A "good" topic should be ...

- Salient
- Significant
- Well-defined, and
- Have received insufficient attention, or
- Be incompletely understood, or
- Require replication, or
- Have new information that sheds new light, or
- Present a new technique that permits new understanding, or
- Provide a distinct perspective that produces valuable meaning



Additional Resources and Recommendations

- **Consult the AAMC's curated [list of resources](#)** for health professionals seeking to advance their scholarship in medical education. Resources include guides, handbooks, blog posts, podcasts, videos, and professional development opportunities related to writing and submitting your work for publication. Also included are resources around conducting a peer review.
- **Learn strategies for success in writing for publication** from this guide by Coverdale et al: [Writing for academia: Getting your research into print: AMEE Guide No. 74. Med Teach. 2013;35:e926-e934.](#)
- **Check out guidance for reviewers in the [Review Criteria for Research Manuscripts](#)**, which Dr. O'Brien noted is useful not only for reviewers but also for authors because it offers "a lot of great tips on what reviewers are looking for and how to strengthen your manuscript."
- **Reference the [Conducting Research in Health Professions Education eBook](#)**, which includes 40 AM Last Pages with easy-to-follow guidance on designing, conducting, and writing up research and other scholarly writing.
 - In particular, the editors recommended the AM Last Page by Lingard & Watling: [It's a Story, Not a Study: Writing an Effective Research Paper.](#)
- **Check out [the Writer's Craft series](#)** published in the journal *Perspectives on Medical Education*. It has "great tips to help all of us be better writers," said Dr. O'Brien.
- **Keep up with what's being published:** Subscribe to receive email updates on what's being published in [Academic Medicine](#) and [MedEdPORTAL](#).

These key moments and helpful resources are from a monthly webinar series hosted by the editorial teams of the AAMC's 2 peer-reviewed journals, Academic Medicine and MedEdPORTAL. Sessions cover the importance of publishing your education scholarship and practical suggestions for how to do so successfully. All are invited to attend. [Learn more about upcoming sessions.](#)

