

# Learning about the editorial process: The road to publication

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## Abstract

This article shows the main steps that must have the writings that are received for publication in our journal. The focus on teaching and learning of the publishing process are proposed as one of the guides to direct the writing process, emphasizing also that the rigorous respect of the Instructions to the authors and methodological clarity to select and write a specific type of scientific paper constitute the pillars for a successful publication.

## Key words

Academic article, clinical trial, scientific publication, scientific journal, publishing process.

How well do you like being the reader rather than the author? How many times have you thought that as a member of a professional team or as an independent professional you could have been the author of the article you are reading? Has your knowledge and experience ever put you in this position? Have you ever felt that there was no one you knew who was qualified to help you with this problem?

On the other hand, if you have started writing and submitted something for publication in this magazine, have you felt uncertainty about your fate as a writer? Surely you have already had the feeling that the time required for revising your writing just does not fit in with your global vision of your working life.

In either case, the editorial board of the *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology* wants to help you answer these questions or any other uncertainties you may have about publishing from the transition from reading to writing to the editorial process that will give birth to your article, review, case study, letter, etc.

As if it were your child, your paper should go through a growth period of 5 or 6 editorial stages. We bet on this method because the knowledge you will acquire will allow you to better consider the parameters of scientific

quality with which you should construct your product. You will also help us so that our focus can be less focused on form and more focused on methodology, content, conclusions and new contributions in the field of gastroenterology. In other words, you will help us publish your work.

So take a moment and join us in getting to know the process. Here are the steps:

1. Reception and management of incoming articles.
2. Evaluation and approval of articles.
3. Final deliberation and decision by the editorial committee.
4. Magazine production.

When the Colombian Review of Gastroenterology receives your work, it must first go through the step defined as *Reception and management of incoming articles*. This includes all aspects of managing articles received prior to evaluation and approval.

In this step the editor and his/her assistant initially separate material that meets the scientific formality established in the editorial guidelines issued to the community in the "Indications for Authors" section from the material that does not meet those requirements.

The article is entered into the *Papers Accepted for Review* database if and only if it meets certain requirements. For example, the body of the article is separated from the author's id information (their anonymity is key to the peer evaluation); that a certification is annexed proving that the article is not being simultaneously presented in another magazine.

We will pay special attention to whether or not the paper meets the formal parameters for the particular type of article since the structure and length of article permitted vary for original research, systematic reviews, case presentations, and other types of articles. In addition, the editorial staff must judge the article to be pertinent to the subject, well written, coherent and clear. In other words, editors require that authors exhibit the basics of education: they must be able to read and write!

Once the article has been formally accepted, you will receive timely notice from the *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology* informing you that your paper and other complementary documents have been accepted and formally entered into the *Evaluation and approval process*. You will also be informed about the different stages, moments and approval times in this process which may take weeks or even months.

The editorial staff will assign an internal ID code to your paper (Sequential type RCG-2012-0000) order to track the process until publication. Authors will receive updates from the *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology* to keep them informed of the results of the evaluation, the state of each process, editorial changes and clarifications, and any other necessary information.

The next stage is the actual evaluation and approval of your article. The selection of two to four peer reviewers depending on the subject implies looking for the authors you have referenced in your paper as well as national or international experts renowned for their publications on the subject.

The magazines quality greatly depends on the peer reviewers. Hopefully, peer reviewers can be found in country's other than that of the authors. Potential reviewers are sent an invitation notice with the paper's subject and summary annexed. Many of those invited are uninterested or do not answer the invitation. It is not an exaggeration to say that, on average, ten invitations are sent for every three reviewers who accept.

You should be aware that each peer reviewer is sent a letter formalizing her/his appointment together with an evaluation form, the magazine's publication guidelines and your article's text without the author's name or identifying information. The evaluation process is anonymous: the author does not know who the peer reviewers are, and the peer reviewers do not know who the authors are.

Once the reviewer arrives at his or her opinion, a process which should take no more than 4 weeks, you will receive a document with the reviewer's observations. You will be asked if you wish to continue with a new version and correction of your paper, and you will be assigned a deadline for submission of corrections.

Your article may go through as many as 5 versions after you submit the original version. This should not alarm you or disillusion you since, as you can verify, the process which will be created among the members of the editorial committee, the peer reviewers and you the author will generate a space for perfecting scientific writing and evaluative learning.

Once the peer reviewers have approved the scientific quality of your work for publication, you will be informed that the article has passed on to the *Final deliberation and decision by the Editorial Committee*. This stage will determine the issue of the magazine in which your article will appear. Decisions usually respect the order in which the articles are received. This stage will also determine of the magazine the section of the magazine in which your article will appear. The *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology* has sections for editorials, original research papers, controversies in gastroenterology, clinical problems, review articles and case reports.

Your article will enter a fourth stage which has to do with *producing that issue of the magazine*. You will be asked to send a letter ceding copyright (but not the intellectual rights) to the *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology*. Simultaneously your article will be submitted for style review and be totally or partially translated into English (currently the only language the magazine is translated into). The company contracted to publish the magazine will work simultaneously on your article's graphic design. The final design is sent to all authors for correction of any remaining errors or inconsistencies. This is the last chance to modify the paper since it will be printed after your approval.

Finally, by means of a happy communiqué, the *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology* will announce the date your article will be published and send you a certificate concerning your article and authorship.

The quality of your publications will determine whether the *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology* will remain indexed in national or international databases. In turn, it will allow you to be considered among the principal sources of scientific research regarding gastrointestinal pathologies within our environment.

The policies of the *Colombian Review of Gastroenterology's* editor and editorial committee are the means to successfully capture your experiences, professional knowledge and practice in a scientific article: do not forget these useful guidelines.

- First check the Author's Guidelines. They will define the type of article you want to write and will let you

know if your subject fits within the magazine's scientific field.

- Do not use 200 words to say what you could say with 100; use clear, coherent and precise language.
- Start by writing a case report, the simplest type of writing. The accumulated experience will allow you to progress to more complex publications such as a review, research, or personal reflection article.
- Provide good epidemiological advice. It should be strict but not to the point that it obstructs inclusion of your valuable experience.
- Get used to being evaluated and make proactive use of the comments of your peer reviewers, the editor and the editorial committee.
- Remember that your country's scientific and socio-cultural development depend upon your consolidation as a writer and researcher.

- Do not doubt that understanding the editorial process and following the magazine's guidelines will help us publish your articles. Help us achieve this.

As you have read, the editorial process involved in publication of your article is not simple, but it's not impossible. We therefore urge you: never abandon your dreams of becoming an author!

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