



# Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research

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## Editorial:

### Editing of a Scholarly paper

As editors, we have found most scholarly manuscripts require editing prior to being accepted for publication. However, authors often do not understand why their manuscripts need editing, what it means to have their papers edited or how to go about selecting someone to edit their work prior to submission to a scholarly English language research journal. Thus, the purpose of this editorial is to provide information regarding: why a manuscript may need editing, what is involved in editing a scholarly piece of work and how to go about selecting a qualified person to edit a manuscript, prior to its submission to an English language research journal.

After spending considerable time planning, developing, and conducting research, one either wants to, or is required to, publish his/her research findings in an English language journal. Such a requirement can be a daunting task to those for whom English is a second language. Not only does the author have to explain, in English, what was done and the meaning of what was found, but has to do so in a logical, coherent, grammatically correct and readable form. This can be especially difficult when one has English vocabulary, comprehension and composition limitations. Rather than producing a publishable manuscript, an inexperienced, English as a second language author often writes and submits a paper that is returned with comments from the journal's editors about its need for major revisions.

Common grammar, spelling and punctuation errors readily can be noted and corrected, by the author, through use of spell and grammar checks available via the computer software programs used to compose the manuscript. However, lack of logical sequencing of thoughts, oversight of adequate detail, jumps in thought, incorrect usage of tenses and words, missing information, inadequate and/or incorrect documentation, failure to match the statistical analysis to the research question(s), as well as failure to address all components of the purpose or research questions often are overlooked prior to submission of the manuscript. Therefore, it becomes essential, especially for English as second language authors, to have papers edited by someone who has command of the English language, as well as comprehension of the entire research process.

Selecting a qualified person to edit a scholarly paper requires time, effort and thorough knowledge of what needs to be accomplished. A classmate or instructor, although potentially more fluent in English than the author, may not be sensitive to the requirements of the journal to which the manuscript is being submitted. Thus, it is essential for both the author and whomever edits the manuscript to obtain and follow

the “Instructions or Guidelines to Authors” of the selected journal. English language nursing journals typically publish their instructions or guidelines to authors no less than once each year. The Instructions to Authors for the *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research* can be found in the back of each issue of the journal. Since journals often update their instructions to authors, it is important to obtain the most recent version.

Simply reading the journal’s instructions or guidelines to authors does not qualify someone as a competent editor of a scholarly paper. Rather, the person who is editing a manuscript needs to understand the content he/she is editing, so as to be able to determine if what is written is logical, correct and coherent. Thus, the most qualified person to edit a nursing research manuscript, prior to submission to an English language nursing journal, is someone who understands nursing and nursing research, and is competent in written English. This most often means such a person needs to have written nursing research manuscripts that have been published in an English language journal, and be knowledgeable in English grammar and punctuation. **Simply correcting spelling, tenses and punctuation is not scholarly editing!**

In Japan, China and Thailand, we have been told papers submitted for consideration for publication have been edited by a professional editor. However, too often the “professional editor” is a native English language speaker who is not a nurse and does not understand nursing or nursing research. In addition, often the “professional editor” has not successfully published in an English language nursing journal. When this is the case, the person does not truly comprehend and/or understand what is required in editing manuscripts written by authors who use English as a second language. Therefore, to make certain someone is qualified to edit nursing research manuscripts that will be submitted for consideration for publication in an English language nursing journal, we encourage all authors to check the credentials of anyone who claims to be an “editor”, as well as review manuscripts he/she has written and/or edited.

To guide individuals who may serve as an editor of a nursing research manuscript written for submission to the *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, we have listed below some basic questions an editor needs to be able to answer during the editorial process.

- **Title:** Does the title accurately describe all aspects of the manuscript content?
- **Abstract:** Does the abstract provide an accurate overview of the manuscript? Does the abstract summarize the major point(s) and follow the same order as the manuscript content?
- **Introduction:** Does the introduction entice the reader to continue reading? Does the introduction establish a need for the manuscript?
- **Review of literature:** Does the literature review provide a thorough, yet concise and synthesized, presentation of relevant literature? Is current literature included, as well as publications that are considered “classics”? Are ideas and material organized in a logical and meaningful manner?

- **Research aims/questions/hypotheses:** Are the aims/questions/hypotheses clearly stated?
- **Method:** Is the research method stated? If so, does it match the aims/hypotheses/questions of the study? Are the strategies used to obtain the sample described? Is the sample that was obtained described? Is the procedure for obtaining data described? Are the means (instruments/interviews, etc.) used to obtain data described in detail? Are ethical issues adequately addressed? Are the means by which data were analyzed adequately described?
- **Results:** Are the research findings adequately and accurately described? Are the results related back to the original aims/questions/hypotheses? If tables or figures are used, do they supplement and not repeat content in the narrative? If tables and figures are used, are they understandable independent of the manuscript narrative?
- **Discussion:** Is the discussion an interpretation of findings and not simply a repeat of content presented in the results section? Is reference and comparison of the findings to prior relevant research made? Does the discussion address all findings presented in the results section?
- **Conclusions:** Are the major contributions of the study findings highlighted? Do the conclusions logically fit with the manuscript's introduction? Are implications of the findings related back to nursing research and practice?
- **References:** Are references accurately cited according to the style of citation (Vancouver) requested by the journal? Do the citations in the body of the manuscript match those in the references list? Are references current and appropriate?
- **Limitations and future research:** Are limitations of the study presented? Are suggestions made, for future research, based upon the study's limitations and findings?

Please recognize that competently edited manuscripts require less time to review. Thus, authors of well-edited manuscripts have fewer revisions to make, as well as receive quicker notification their scholarly works have been accepted for publication.

We look forward to receiving and reviewing the manuscripts you submit for consideration for publication.

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