How to publish in high impact journals?
Differential effects on gating kinetics

A

+120 mV
0 mV
-80 mV

[menthol] (µM)

[AITC] (µM)

B

C

[menthol] (µM)

[AITC] (µM)

activation (ms)
deactivation (ms)

Time (s)

control menthol AITC

40 ms
5 nA

0 mV -80 mV
+120 mV
How to publish in high impact journals?
Next day - reality check...
Publishing research in high impact journals – different perspectives

You: “I want to publish in high impact journals because...
... I want my work to be widely read
... I want to become a famous scientist
... I need it to get a (permanent) position
... I need it to get funding
... my mum would be so proud”

Funders: “We fund people that published in high impact journals because...
... it probably means that they did important research
... it provides an easy metric to compare researchers
... it is much faster than actually reading their papers
... they are more likely to publish again in HI Journals”

University: “We hire people that published in high impact journals because...
... it probably means that they did important research
... it provides an easy metric to compare researchers
... it is much faster than actually reading their papers
... they are more likely to attract funding”

HI Journals: “We want to publish papers that...
... represent important advances
... will be highly cited
... increase our next IF ➔ sell more copies”
Understanding the “logic” of a High Impact Journal

logic?

Fair??

High Impact. Low Price. Logic?

Fair??

Join our expanding community of readers at our exclusive impact factor rate of only $42, £42 or €42
More scientists → more papers submitted

Research papers submitted vs. Year

- Intercept: -391927.16912 ± 52994.19637
- Slope: 200.25735 ± 26.43094
- Reduced Chi-Sqr: 285026.6299
- R-Square: 0.79283
- Pearson's r: 0.89041
And Nature publishes less and less papers
So chances to get accepted are becoming flimsy
Errors an editor can make...

**Type I error:**
Publishing a paper that in the end does not get a lot of attention/citations.
Citations to Nature papers published in 2008

Mean (~5 year IF)
Errors an editor can make...

**Type I error:**
Publishing a paper that in the end does not get a lot of attention/citations.

**Type II error:**
Not publishing a paper that does actually represent a major breakthrough and later receives a lot of attention/citations.
A classical Type II error...

The Editor of NATURE presents his compliments to

Mr. H. A. Krebs

and regrets that as he has already sufficient letters to fill the correspondence columns of NATURE for seven or eight weeks, it is undesirable to accept further letters at the present time on account of the delay which must occur in their publication.

If Mr. Krebs does not mind such delay, the Editor is prepared to keep the letter until the congestion is relieved in the hope of making use of it. He returns it now, however, in case Mr. Krebs prefers to submit it for early publication to another periodical.
**Type I error:**
Publishing a paper that in the end does not get a lot of attention/citations.

**Type II error:**
Not publishing a paper that does actually represent a major breakthrough and later receives a lot of attention/citations.

**Type III error:**
Publishing a paper with fabricated data.
Retraction: Stimulus–triggered fate conversion of somatic cells into pluripotency

Haruko Obokata, Teruhiko Wakayama, Yoshiki Sasai, Koji Kojima, Martin P. Vacanti, Hitoshi Niwa, Masayuki Yamato & Charles A. Vacanti

Nature 505, 641–647 (2014); doi:10.1038/nature12968

Several critical errors have been found in our Article and Letter (http://
**Type I error:**
Publishing a paper that in the end does not get a lot of attention/citations.

**Type II error:**
Not publishing a paper that does actually represents a major breakthrough and later receives a lot of attention/citations.

**Type III error:**
Publishing a paper with fabricated data.

**Type IV error:**
Publishing a paper with wrong conclusions.

But that’s generally not a bad thing for the IF...
So how to get published in a high impact journal?

Mean (~5 year IF)
Tip No 1

Do the drunken uncle* test

*or tipsy aunt, boozed brother, ....
The drunken uncle test...

If you cannot summarize your main finding in an exciting way in one or a few sentences, the chances are low that you will convince the responsible editor of a high impact journal.

These journals do extensive “Triage”
Dear Professor Voets,

Thank you for submitting your manuscript entitled “Really the coolest data we have had in the last two decades” for consideration. I have discussed your manuscript with one of the other senior editors, and I regret that we have decided that we are not able to publish it in Nature.

As you may know, we decline a substantial proportion of manuscripts without sending them to referees, so that they may be sent elsewhere without delay. In such cases, even if referees were to certify the manuscript as technically correct, we do not believe that it represents a development of sufficient scientific impact to warrant publication in Nature. These editorial judgments are based on such considerations as the degree of advance provided, the breadth of potential interest to researchers and timeliness. In the present case, we do not feel that your paper has matched our criteria for further consideration. We therefore feel that the paper would find a more suitable outlet in another journal.

Please be assured that this editorial decision does not represent a criticism of the quality of your work, and neither are we questioning its value to others working in this area. We hope that you will rapidly receive a more favorable response elsewhere.

I am sorry that we cannot respond more positively on this occasion.

Sincerely,

John NoClue, Ph.D.
Senior Editor
Nature
What may help...

• Make sure that your manuscript is super-smooth:
  - Perfect figures
  - Perfect English
  - Perfect Statistics
  - Understandable abstract
  - Exactly right format

• Present your data at meetings where Editors / Big Shots are present
  - They may give tips
  - They might remember you when the paper is on their desk

• Get to know editors
  - Seek contact at meetings
  - Invite them to your talk/meeting
Tip No 2

Try

Pros: “Niet geschoten is altijd mis”
You learn from your mistakes

Cons: You may lose time
You will be disappointed/frustrated

Mean citations/year during first 5 years

Journal's 5-years impact factor

Maybe deserved better?

Maybe overrated?
Dear Thomas,

Thank you for submitting your manuscript entitled "Really the coolest data we have had in the last two decades" to Nature X. I am pleased to tell you that we are sending your paper out for review.

I will be in touch again as soon as I have received comments from our reviewers.

Best wishes,
Mirella

Mirella SomeClue, PhD
Senior Editor
Nature X
Overall, I like the study very much and feel that it is highly appropriate for Nature X. I have a few quibbles that I would like the authors to explicitly address in revision.

Therefore, even if one could address the multitude of insufficiencies and mistakes listed below, the impact of the results would be far too low for the wide readership of a Nature Journal.

This is a carefully-designed study; the electrophysiology data were of high quality; the results were carefully analyzed, and beautifully modeled. This is an interesting scientific question of broad interest to TRP and other ion channel biologists and biophysicists.

One paper – different opinions.

This could be mama

Probably a highly respected and very smart colleague.

Jealous and worthless colleague.
What then...

Be extremely polite to referees!

**Not good:** “The referee didn’t get the point and did not read the paper well”

**Better:** “We understand that in the original manuscript, these points were not clearly explained and highlighted, as rightfully pointed out by the referee. We have therefore made extensive changes to the manuscript…”

If referees/editors make obvious mistakes ➞ fight (rebut, call, harass...)

If it doesn’t work ➞ move on to the next journal
   ➞ don’t consider it as a failure, it is “part of the game”
   ➞ you will get other chances
Tip No 3

Do thorough research and try to understand what you don’t understand.

- There is no such thing like a project that will definitely lead to a high impact publication.
- If you switch your research to a specific field because is successful, then you are probably too late...
- The best papers/coolest findings were not planned, but “serendipity”, by researchers that wanted to understand some strange observation.
Work ⇔ reward?

Mean citations/year during first 5 years
Journal's 5-years impact factor

3 months work accepted in 1 month
3 years work accepted in 2 years

3 months work accepted in 1 month
3 years work accepted in 2 years
Rejection improves eventual impact of manuscripts

A study of papers’ histories from submission to publication unearths unexpected patterns.

Philip Ball

11 October 2012

Just had your paper rejected? Don’t worry — that might boost its ultimate citation tally. An excavation of scientific papers’ usually hidden prepublication trajectories from journal to journal has found that papers published after having first been rejected elsewhere receive significantly more citations on average than ones accepted on first submission.

This is one of the unexpected insights from a project led by David Colquhoun at the UK-based Institute for Animal Health.
SUCCESS
Because you too can own this face of pure accomplishment