Initial submission assessment

By the end of this module, you will:
✓ have developed an understanding of the importance of each step of the submission assessment process
✓ understand how to use the tools available to assess if a manuscript meets the journal requirements
✓ be able to determine when a manuscript requires resubmission or desk rejection
Submission checks include, but are not limited to

- A check for completeness: all components of the manuscript should be provided in accordance with the guide for authors (GfA) and the editorial policies of the journal

- Ensuring that a complete declaration of interest statement has been provided

- Assessing the iThenticate similarity check results

- Verifying that the research conforms to all protocols relevant to the specific field of research
Completeness of the manuscript

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Material and methods
- Results and discussion
- Conclusions
- Figure, tables and captions
- References
- Acknowledgments
- Data and supplementary material

- Cover letter
- Correct listing of authors’ names and affiliations
- Declaration of interest statement
- Permission to reuse previously published content
- Written consent of any cited individual(s)
Language – manuscript is written in poor English

The scope or impact of the research does **not** meet the threshold for peer review

Desk reject based on scope or impact

The scope and impact of the research **does** meet the threshold for peer review

The level of language is too poor for reviewers to assess the merit of the research – **request revisions**

The level of language is not perfect, but sufficiently understandable – **send for peer review**
## Quiz – Language

<table>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Multiple Choice</th>
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| You received a submission that is in principle interesting but barely understandable due to poor language. You are afraid reviewers will not receive the submission positively because of it. You would usually ask the authors to rewrite the manuscript, but they have provided a certificate confirming that they have used a paid language service. Should you still ask them to rewrite the manuscript? | A. No, it’s clear that the authors are unable to provide the paper in suitable language, so the submission should be rejected out of scope to avoid upsetting the authors for wasting money.  
B. No, the paper should receive a language reject so the authors understand they have wasted time and money on a language service.  
C. Yes, the research is interesting so we should be giving the authors another chance. |

**Voice over by Chris instead? As the previous slide was in your voice**
iThenticate similarity check

• Every paper is run through a similarity check and the resulting report is integrated into the submission system
• iThenticate detects textual similarities with a growing database of published scholarly literature hosted by Crossref
• It is imperative to check the similarity report
• iThenticate does not compare submissions against manuscripts still in the editorial process
• The similarity report detects all sources of text overlap
• Elsevier encourages authors to share their preprint anywhere at any time
• Peer reviewed conference proceedings are considered prior publication,
  conference program abstracts are not
• Only textual overlap can be detected through iThenticate!
iThenticate – Examples
iThenticate – Examples

Introduction


3


Results

The Numbers of the Mammalian Intestinal Microbiota are reduced during Pathogen-Induced Inflammation

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Pellentesque egestas uninfected C57BL/6 mice contained a proximately 1010 bacteria/g colon., Aenean sagittis ultrices sapien non semper. Nulla facilisi. Investigate the changes that occur in the levels of colonic microbial population. Proin placerat sapien sed dui ultrices laoreet. Etiam semper non lorem eget dictum. Duis posuere erat et euisum consectetur.

Discussion

We have tested the hypothesis that microorganisms that cause intestinal inflammation associate negatively with intestinal microbiota. The disruption is due to the inflammatory response mediated by the host, or a combination of these. Inflammation and microorganisms that cause intestinal inflammation, inflammation that causes microorganisms to infect the intestine, or both. Curabitur nec erat nisi. Nullam faucibus vel dolor in lobortis. Sed mollis, nibh nec bibendum ullamcorper, elit libero porta urna, nec hendrerit justo tortor nec enim.

We have demonstrated that the intestinal microbiota is a potential target for regulatory strategies.
iThenticate similarity check – summary

- Is the research original?
- In which section of the paper can textual overlap be found?
- Does the textual overlap describe background and methods or results and conclusions?
- How continuous is the overlap?
- Are appropriate references included when there is textual overlap?
### Question

You have received a submission that contains very exciting research. The authors let you know in their cover letter that they have published the research in their native language at a local university press. Now realizing the potential impact of their work, they want to ensure that a larger readership has access to the results. Is it ok to consider the manuscript for publication?

### Multiple Choice

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<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>No, this is considered dual publication and the manuscript should be rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Yes, it is fine to consider as long as the authors rewrite the manuscript so that it is not a direct translation of the previous paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Yes, the research is very important and should be published in a journal with a broad audience</td>
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Declaration of interests

Conflicting interests can be:

- Personal shares in a company that may benefit from the outcome of the research
- Employment in a company with financial interest in the outcome of the research
- Financial support of the research from an organization with financial interest in the outcome of the research
- Close personal relationships with an individual who has conflicting interests
### Quiz – Conflict of interests

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<td>You have received a submission investigating the effects of a herb on digestion. One of the authors of the submission has a second job selling herbal alternative medicines, including the one described in the submission. Should this be considered a conflict of interest (COI)?</td>
<td>A. Yes, this can be considered and the COI should be declared clearly&lt;br&gt;B. Yes, the paper shows that the drug aids digestion, so it is a clear COI and the paper should be rejected&lt;br&gt;C. No, the author is unlikely to financially benefit from the research’s publication as there are already similar digestive drugs available</td>
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Research involving animal and human subjects

• Animal welfare is regulated by the ARRIVE guidelines
  – Reduce the number of animals required
  – Avoid unnecessary suffering
  – Mandatory ethics approval

• Journals publishing medical research follow recommendations of The International Committee of Medical Journal editors (ICMJE)
  – Mandatory ethics approval prior to the research being done
  – Informed consent obtained from all research subjects
  – Clinical Trials need to be registered before conducted

• Please use common sense
You have received a submission that includes mice experiments. The authors state in their cover letter that ethics approval is not required in their home country. Can the submission be considered for publication?

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<tr>
<td>You have received a submission that includes mice experiments. The authors state in their cover letter that ethics approval is not required in their home country. Can the submission be considered for publication?</td>
<td>A. Yes, if you can confirm that the country in question does not have ethics guidelines.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Yes, if the research was conducted in the country in question and all authors reside there.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C. No, Elsevier prohibits publication of animal experiments without ethics committee approval.</td>
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**Quiz – Human experiments**

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<tr>
<td>You have received a submission that includes experiments with children. Do the authors need to provide proof of informed consent?</td>
<td>A. No, as the individuals are minor they cannot legally consent and the study should be rejected</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>B. Yes, all individuals participating in a human study need to consent to the study including minors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Yes, informed consent of minors needs to be provided by their legal guardians</td>
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</table>
In summary, before sending a manuscript to peer review, you need to make sure that...

- All relevant manuscript files and information have been submitted
- The manuscript is presented in good, readable English
- The manuscript has passed an iThenticate Similarity Check
- A declaration of interest statement is available
- Any additional applicable guidelines have been followed