Mentoring Trainees in Writing a Case Report

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SIU MEDICINE
FORWARD. FOR YOU.

SCENARIO

- *"Dr. Prakash, that was such an interesting case of TB arthritis!"*
- "Great! I'm glad you got so much out of it!"
- *"Can I write it up?"*
- "Sure!"

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- "Sure!"
- *"Okay, so now what……………?"*

WRITING A CASE REPORT

- Identify all involved parties
  - Outline roles/responsibilities of each member
- Determine authorship
  - First, Second, to Senior
- Select a journal
  - Peer-reviewed, preferably pub med indexed
- Read Instructions to the Authors carefully
- Set a realistic timeline with goals
- Hold the trainee to the timeline
- Stay responsive
- Be patient
- Give constructive feedback during the process
- Detailed final editing

IDENTIFY ALL INVOLVED PARTIES

- The resident who wants to write up the case
- You as the attending physician on the case
- Any other attendings/residents who contributed substantially to the case—invitation as a basic courtesy
  - Don't forget Pathologists and other consultants
- Fellows
  - Always ask the involved fellow if he or she intends to present or publish the case.
  - If more than one resident and fellow with similar involvement are interested, form a writing team and distribute the work with deadlines. Whoever does most of the work responsibly and on time gets first authorship.

DETERMINE AUTHORSHIP

- First author
  - Leads the project
  - Responsible for the majority of the paper
    - Outline, looking into journals and instructions for authors
    - Leads the majority of correspondence among authors during editing process
- Second and Subsequent Authors
  - Works closely with first author
  - Contributes ideas and assists with editing process
- Senior or last author
  - You as the attending physician
  - Typically the corresponding author as well

SELECT A JOURNAL

- Peer-reviewed
  - More academic
  - Regarded as a legitimate publication by fellowship training programs
- Preferably pub-med indexed
- Success in Publishing In:
  - Chest
  - Infectious Diseases in Clinical Practice
  - Annals of Internal Medicine
  - Journal of Clinical Microbiology
- Reach out to fellowship PDs or consultants with experience in publishing for suggested journals
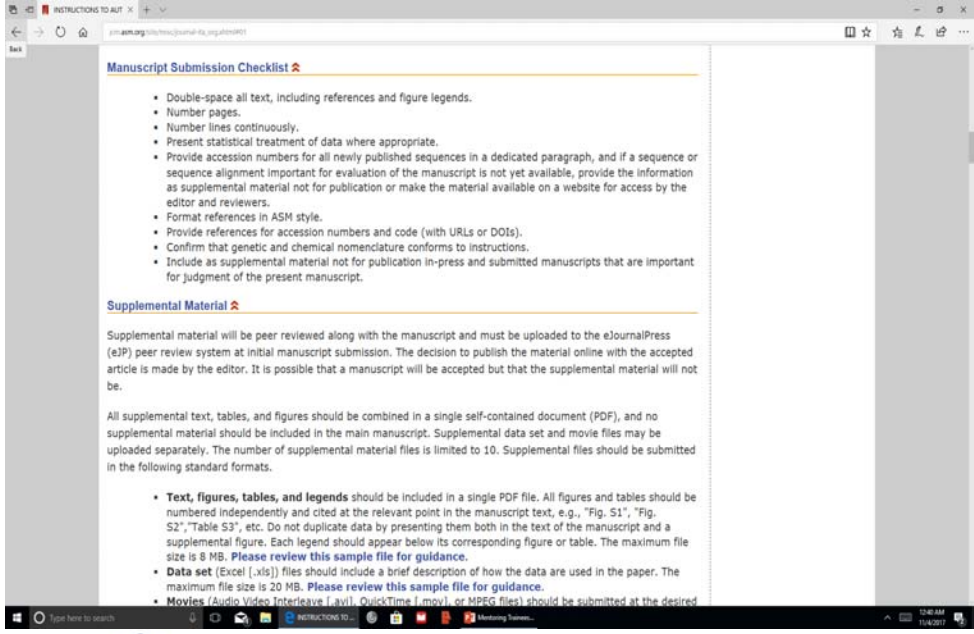

READ "INSTRUCTIONS TO THE AUTHOR"

SET A REALISTIC TIMELINE WITH GOALS

- By November 15th
  - Resident will reach out to all parties and determine authorship
  - Resident will determine which journal to submit to
  - Resident will organize a meeting among authors to review <u>Instructions to the Authors</u>
- By November 30th
  - With attending guidance, group will come up with a core group of articles from the literature
- By December 30th
  - Resident will work with co-residents to come up with draft
    - Abstract and introduction
    - Case itself
    - Discussion and Review of the Literature
    - Send drafts to attending throughout the process
    - First author delegates responsibility (attending guides this to ensure it is equitable)

SET A REALISTIC TIMELINE WITH GOALS

- By January 15th
  - Attending reviews first draft and sends group the manuscript with edits and suggested changes
- By January 30th
  - First author submits manuscript to journal

HOLD THE TRAINEE TO THE TIMELINE

"When people stop giving you constructive criticism, they have most likely have given up on you."

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- A deadline is a deadline
- Provide mentorship and constructive feedback

STAY RESPONSIVE AND BE PATIENT!

- A deadline is a deadline
- Try to get back to the trainee within a week
- Feedback should be constructive
- Stay supportive and encouraging
  - Oftentimes a lengthy and frustrating process
    - Expect to add twice the amount of time to what you had predicted
  - Easy for trainee to get discouraged

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DETAILED FINAL EDITING

- As senior author, you are ultimately responsible for the manuscript!
- Check through manuscript for spelling and grammar first
- Edit for content and flow
- Check out all references
  - You would be surprised at how many are out of order or plagiarized.
- If evidence of plagiarism, give constructive feedback
- Make sure it follows the format detailed in Instructions to the Author.