

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT JOURNAL FOR PUBLISHING

A Complete Guide

- ▶ THE IMPORTANCE OF JOURNALS
- ▶ WHY FIND THE RIGHT JOURNAL?
- ▶ TOOLS TO FIND THE RIGHT JOURNAL



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Dear Reader,

Greetings from Enago Academy!

As you may be aware, the number of studies getting published in international peer-reviewed journals and the number of journals, both continue to increase every year. It thus becomes imperative to find the right journal to communicate your research breakthroughs to the target audience to improve its impact. This ebook provides step-by-step guidelines and important tips to help you find the appropriate journal for your manuscript. We cover topics ranging from journal/article types to citation metrics and provide insightful tips for identifying predatory journals. Towards the end, you will also find a list of authentic e-resources. It would be our pleasure to help you with your publishing requirements. Please make it a point to visit [enago.com/academy](https://www.enago.com/academy) for further help. We have posted 1,000+ original articles on this knowledge e-platform.

Happy reading!

Regards,

The Enago Academy Team

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WHY PUBLISH?

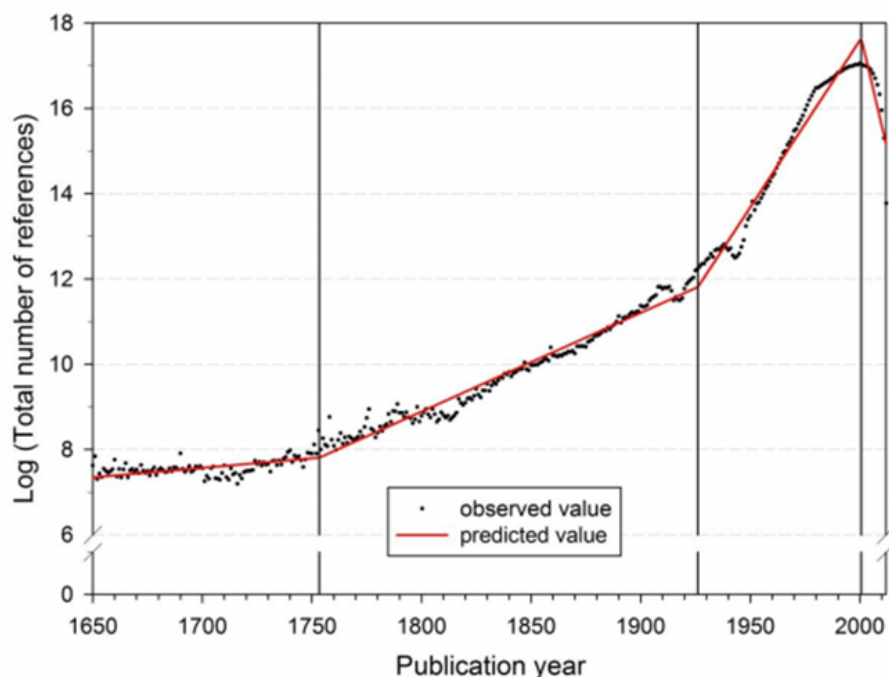
Research outcomes become relevant when shared and communicated within and outside the scientific community. This not only prevents work duplication but also encourages other researchers to work on the existing gap areas. Researchers often share their findings [1] to:

- Maximise the impact of research by disseminating information to the target audience
- Advance academic/research career
- Seek opportunities to collaborate on international projects
- Increase the odds of getting extramural funding
- Assess 'research quality'
- Validate findings and receive feedback
- Receive recognition for ideas/innovation
- Archive research outcomes permanently in the public domain

Growth in Scientific Output and Journals

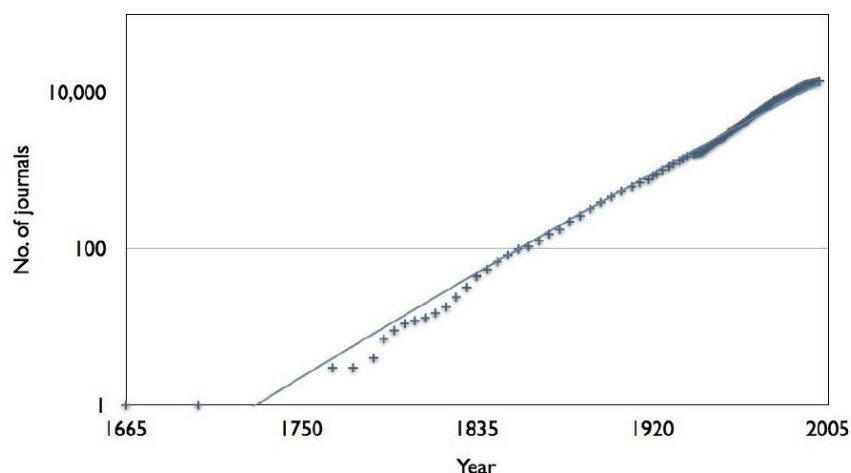
Peer-reviewed journals are one of the most important means for communicating and disseminating research. The history of scholarly publication dates back to 1665 when *Journal des Sçavans* and *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* began publishing. Since then, the growth in scientific output and the increase in the number of journals have been tremendous. A study conducted in 2014 concluded that the growth in science was about 1% in the mid-18th century, 2–3% during World War I & II, and 8–9% in 2012, thus, indicating that scientific output doubles every 9 years [2].





Interestingly, less than 1% of the scientists are able to publish their work every year [3]. A study analyzed the data of 15 million scientists who published their work between 1996 and 2015 and found that over 150,000 scientists were most prolific (and were part of the list of authors) in 41% of the publications [3].

Annual Growth in the Number of Cited References (1650–2012) (Van Noorden R. Global scientific output doubles every nine years: News blog [Internet]. Blogs.nature.com. 2014 [cited 31 July 2017]. Available from: <http://blogs.nature.com/news/2014/05/global-scientific-output-doubles-every-nine-years.html>)

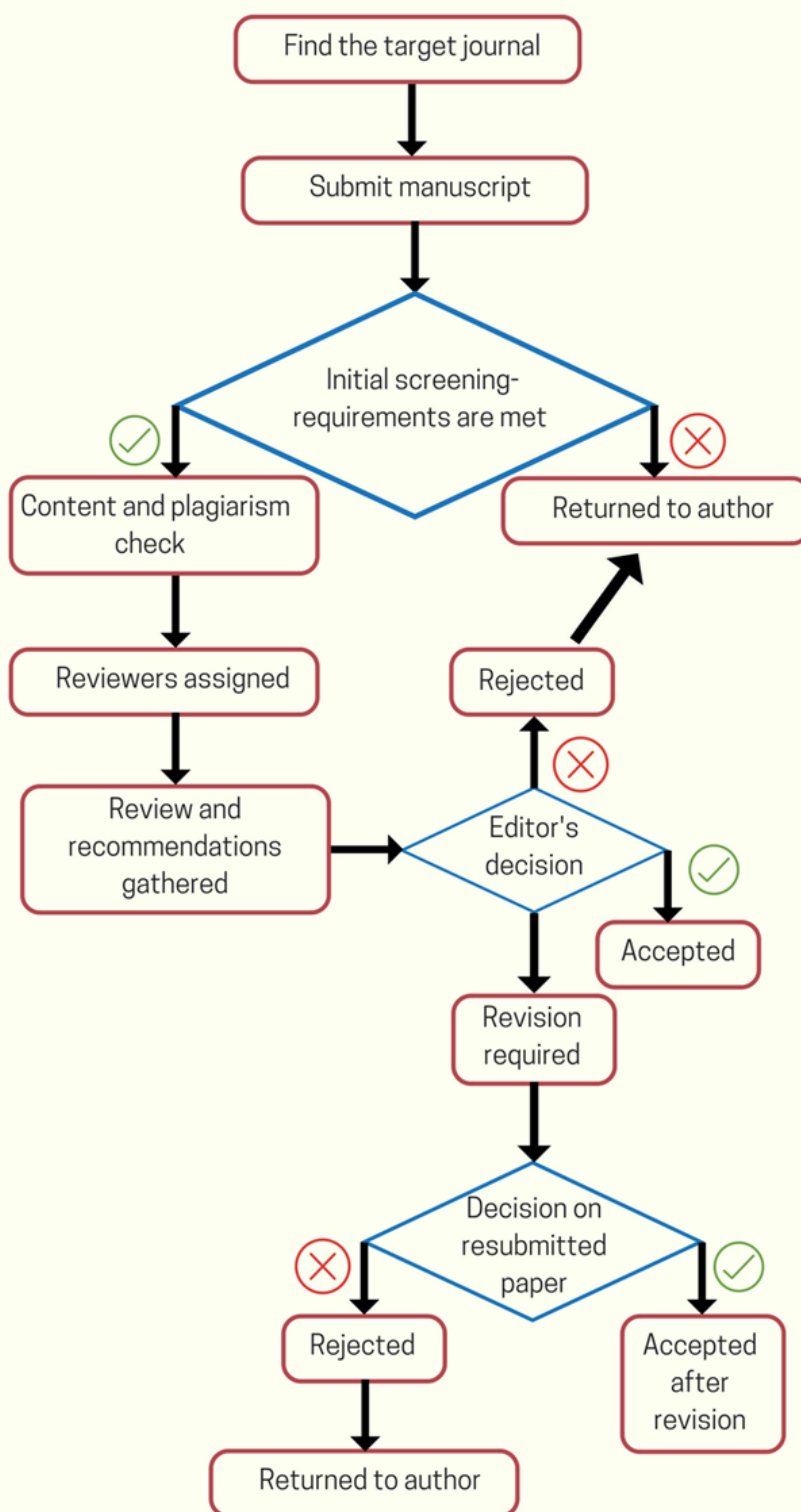


It was estimated that there were over 28,000 English language and more than 6,000 non-English language peer-reviewed journals in late 2014. The number of journals has consistently increased over the last two centuries, at the rate of 3.5% per year [4].

Growth in the Number of Journals (Ware M, Mabe M. The STM Report. An overview of scientific and scholarly journal publishing [Internet]. 2015 [cited 20 July 2017]. Available from: http://www.stm-assoc.org/2015_02_20_STM_Report_2015.pdf)



PUBLICATION CYCLE OVERVIEW



IMPORTANCE OF JOURNALS

Research journals are one of the prominent means for disseminating information. Scientific innovations and advancements are regularly shared with researchers, industry experts, policy makers and society as a whole. Journals help in [5]:

- Maintaining the intellectual output of a researcher by giving appropriate recognition
- Archiving and preserving the reviewed and accepted research results
- Facilitating communication in the scientific community
- Validating the research output through a peer-review process
- Expediting knowledge dissemination
- **Review journals** contain the current state of knowledge or practice in a particular field. They provide background information to those who want an overview on the status in a field.
- **Research journals** are predominantly devoted to reporting original Investigations, including research in the basic sciences. They are usually read by subject experts.
- **Clinical or practice journals** primarily document the state of current practice. This is done through the publication of case reports, discussions, commentaries, etc.

Types of Journals

Journals can be broadly classified as follows:

- **General or all-purpose journals** contain elements of important social, political, and



Types of Articles

The nature of the research and the protocol followed directly influences the [format of the manuscript](#). The articles can be of the following types [6]:

- Original Research: Well-rounded studies that clearly advance prior knowledge on a specific topic
- Case Reports: Reports featuring a specific anonymous patient presenting an unusual disease, treatment, or drug interaction
- Reviews: Scholarly investigations of published research
- Perspectives: Personal opinions/ narratives on a specific topic
- Analyses: In-depth analyses of new policies or medical advances
- Symposia Pieces: Summaries of conferences or symposium presentations
- Book Reviews: Assessments of newly published books
- Profiles: Information on notable people in the field

- Interviews: Transcripts of the interviews or a personal reflection
- Focus Topic Articles: Articles under a specific topic/section featured in one edition

Original research articles can be further subdivided into two categories:

- Argumentative – author takes a declarative stance in the presentation of research.
- Analytical – rather than taking a clear position, author presents the research in the form of a question.





Structure of a Research Paper

- Title: A clear and precise one-line description that grabs attention
- Authors names: This section identifies the first author, co-authors, and the corresponding author
- Affiliations: Official university/institutional address of each author (and contact details for the corresponding author)
- Abstract: Short summary of the manuscript's primary focus area (permitted word counts generally vary from 100 to 300 words)
- Graphical Abstract (requested by many journals): A visual summary of the central theme of the manuscript
- Introduction: Reveals the main problem under investigation
- Materials & Methods: The resources and procedures used to address the problem
- Results: A summary of findings
- Discussion: An interpretation of the findings
- Acknowledgment (if any): Credit people/institutions contributing to the study
- References: List the relevant sources



WHY FIND THE RIGHT JOURNAL?

A paper can be [rejected by a journal](#) because of several reasons. The ratio of submitted to published manuscripts is large, especially for top-tier journals. The most common reasons for journal rejection are outlined below [7]:

- Article content not within the scope of the journal
- Non-conformity with the journal style, format, or guidelines
- Duplication or large overlap with existing work or apparent plagiarism
- Results not novel or significant enough; they lead to only an incremental advance in the field
- Article covers information superficially
- Topic not of interest to the journal's target audience
- Poor quality of research
- Results or interpretation are too preliminary or speculative
- Lack of clarity in the overall presentation
- Acceptance with minor revisions: author(s) expected to reorganize, rewrite parts for clarity, add or correct specific points as directed by the referees
- Acceptance after major revisions: author(s) expected to re-organize the paper, re-calculate data, and write for a different audience or from a different viewpoint.
- Rejection with an invitation to re-submit: author(s) expected to completely re-write the manuscript (or perform additional experiments) based on the referee suggestions prior to re-submission.
- Outright rejection: manuscript not suitable for the journal because of some major methodological error that renders it unpublishable.

The following may occur in the above cases:



6 TIPS TO AVOID JOURNAL REJECTION



1. CHOICE OF JOURNAL

- Make sure that your manuscript is within the **scope of the journal** and its target audience.
- **Seek advice** from senior researchers before shortlisting a journal.
- Always submit to **one journal at a time** and never re-submit to the same journal if rejected.



2. FOLLOWING AUTHOR GUIDELINES

- **Adhere to all instructions** in the journal guidelines & highlight the key points.
- Prepare a checklist and **check all the points** before submission.
- **Hire a science editor** to help you out with these instructions if you lack time.



3. AVOIDING DUPLICATION & PLAGIARISM

- Always acknowledge sources through **proper referencing**.
- **Avoid paraphrasing** content from a source.
- Use a **plagiarism detection tool** to check for any inadvertent plagiarism in your manuscript.



4. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

- Publish only **significant or new findings**.
- Clearly **highlight the novel properties** of your research to justify publication.
- **Choose a low impact journal** if results are insignificant.



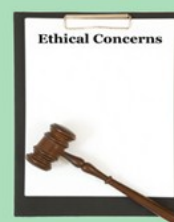
5. TECHNICAL FLAWS

- **Avoid discrepancies** between the Abstract and manuscript.
- Ensure that the Results and Conclusions **answer the study question**.
- Ask all authors to **check the manuscript at least twice** for inaccuracies.
- Have your paper edited by a **professional editing service** to improve its overall quality.



6. ADDRESS ETHICAL CONCERNS

- Agree on authorship before writing the manuscript and ensure all authors **meet the authorship criteria**.
- Disclose all potential **conflicts of interest** in the manuscript and to the journal editor.
- **Adhere to the ethical guidelines** and indicate that the study has proper approvals.



HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT JOURNAL?

The process of selecting the appropriate journal has become increasingly complex because of the proliferation of journals, areas of specialization, and emergence of interdisciplinary topics. Authors have to optimize several criteria and overcome constraints before reaching a decision about where to publish.

Step 1: List the Fields of Study and Related Subjects

The first step in selecting a journal is to consider as many fields of study as possible that relate to your manuscript. Try to create a list of at least five fields of study that overlap with the proposed manuscript's content. Think broadly at this stage; the journal choices can be narrowed down later.

For instance, a sample list for a Physics researcher could be as follows:

Research Topic: Fabrication of carbon nanotubes

- Subject 1: Nanotechnology
- Subject 2: Materials Science
- Subject 3: Applied Physics
- Subject 4: Physical Chemistry
- Subject 5: Biomedical Engineering

Step 2: Find Journals Related to the Listed Fields/ Subjects

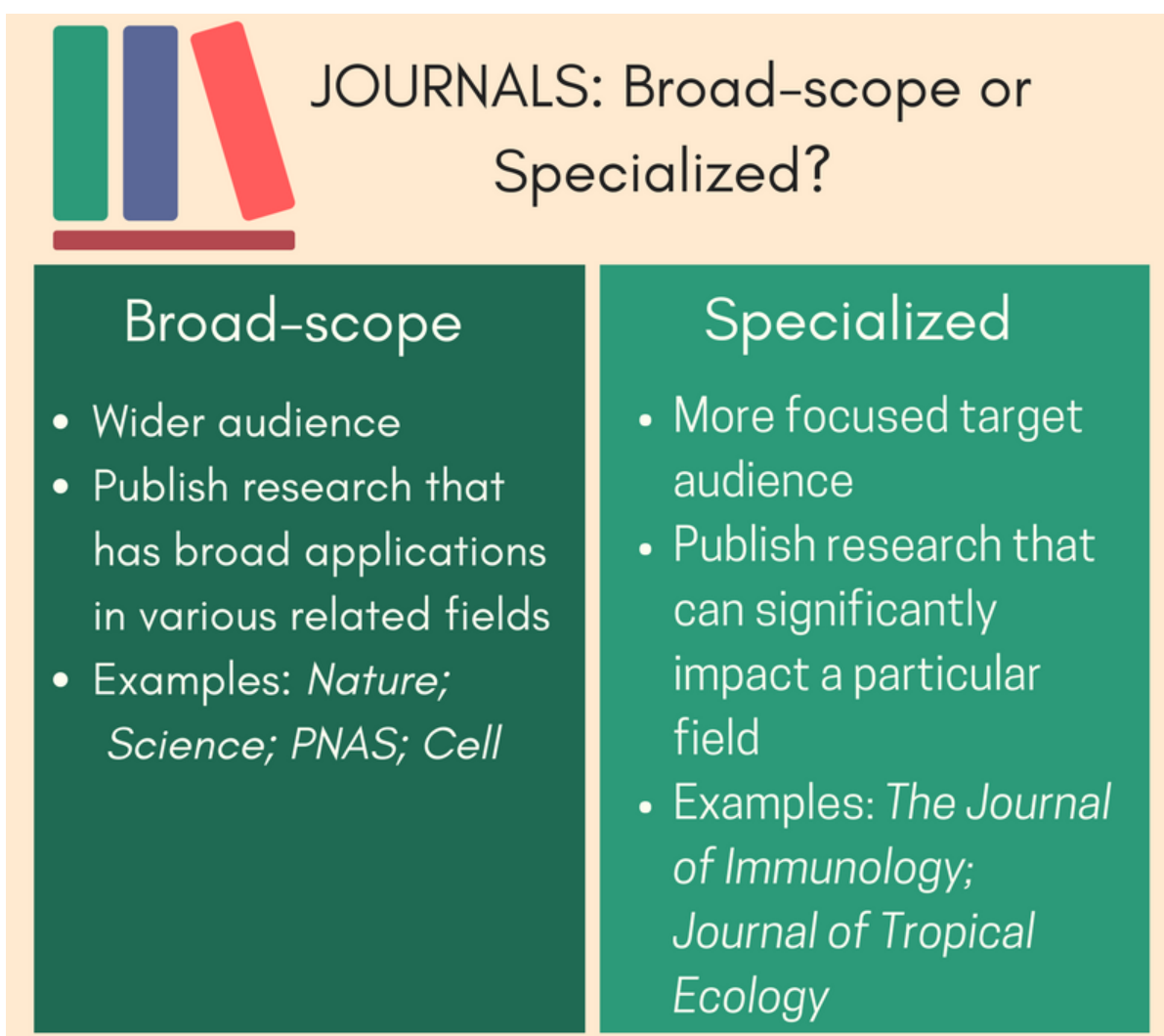
Once you have listed the fields of study that overlap with the manuscript's content, consult online resources, a university librarian, and/or professionals in the fields to identify the journals that are published in each field. The reference list from your thesis may also provide clues to journals that publish in these topic areas. At this point, you should also consider the stated purpose of the journal.

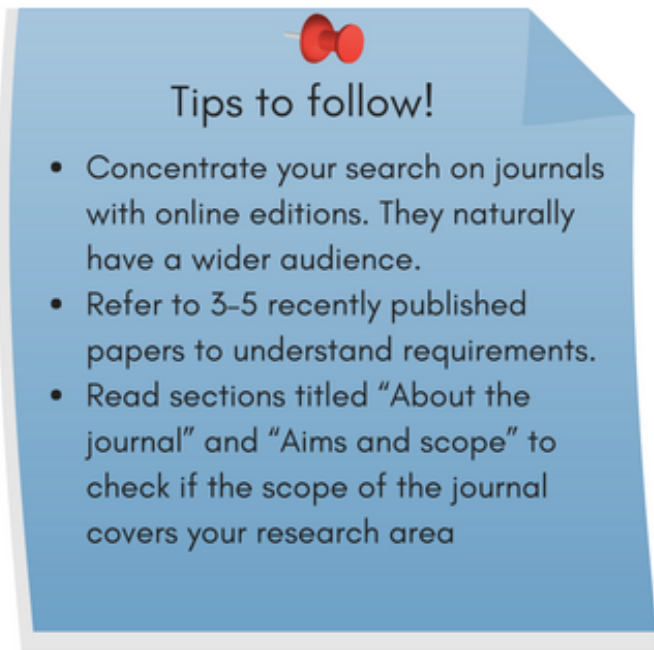


For instance, a sample list for a Physics researcher could be as follows:

- General or all-purpose journals: *Nature*, *Science*
- Review journals: *Review of Modern Physics*, *Applied Physics Reviews*
- Research journals: *Nano Letters*, *Advanced Materials*

Revisiting the different types of journals listed in the above section can help you optimize your publication strategy. Matching the scopes and aims of your manuscript to those of the journal becomes important here. One of the factors that influence the scope of the journal is identifying if the journal falls in a 'broad scope' or 'specialized' category.





Tips to follow!

- Concentrate your search on journals with online editions. They naturally have a wider audience.
- Refer to 3-5 recently published papers to understand requirements.
- Read sections titled "About the journal" and "Aims and scope" to check if the scope of the journal covers your research area

Step 3: List and Compare Journal Characteristics and Competitive Factors

Content and coverage: Scientific journals publish numerous types of articles, including original articles, review articles, letters to the editor, editorials, news reports, commentaries, brief/short communications, and case reports as discussed in the above section. Research articles are the most common types of articles published in medical journals. Journals reporting original research are more likely to report unique contributions to a field and are, therefore, selected more often than those containing only case reports.

Readership/accessibility: International peer-reviewed journals attract a wider readership than regional journals. English is the mostly widely and commonly used language for scientific communication. Therefore, journals that are more important to the international research community will publish only in English. This is especially true for fields such as natural sciences. Most regional journals have now started to publish abstracts in English.






<h3>International Journals</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer the widest exposure and worldwide recognition • Generally higher publishing and ethical standards • May not be accessible to researchers because of lack of funds (subscription-based journals) 	<h3>Regional Journals</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good fit for research that is regionally significant (e.g. endemic disease research) • Lack of international recognition • May not meet the indexing standards of the major databases
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Moreover, open access (OA) journals provide higher visibility, wider audience, and increased discoverability and impact, leading to higher citation rates.

OA refers to the digital online content (journal articles, reviews, conference proceedings, or monographs) that is free from paywall (subscription and/or licensing fees) and permission (copyright and/or licensing agreements) barriers. OA journals can follow gold-no APC, gold-APC, gold-hybrid, or green (self-archiving) business model—depending on how and when they content is made open for public dissemination.



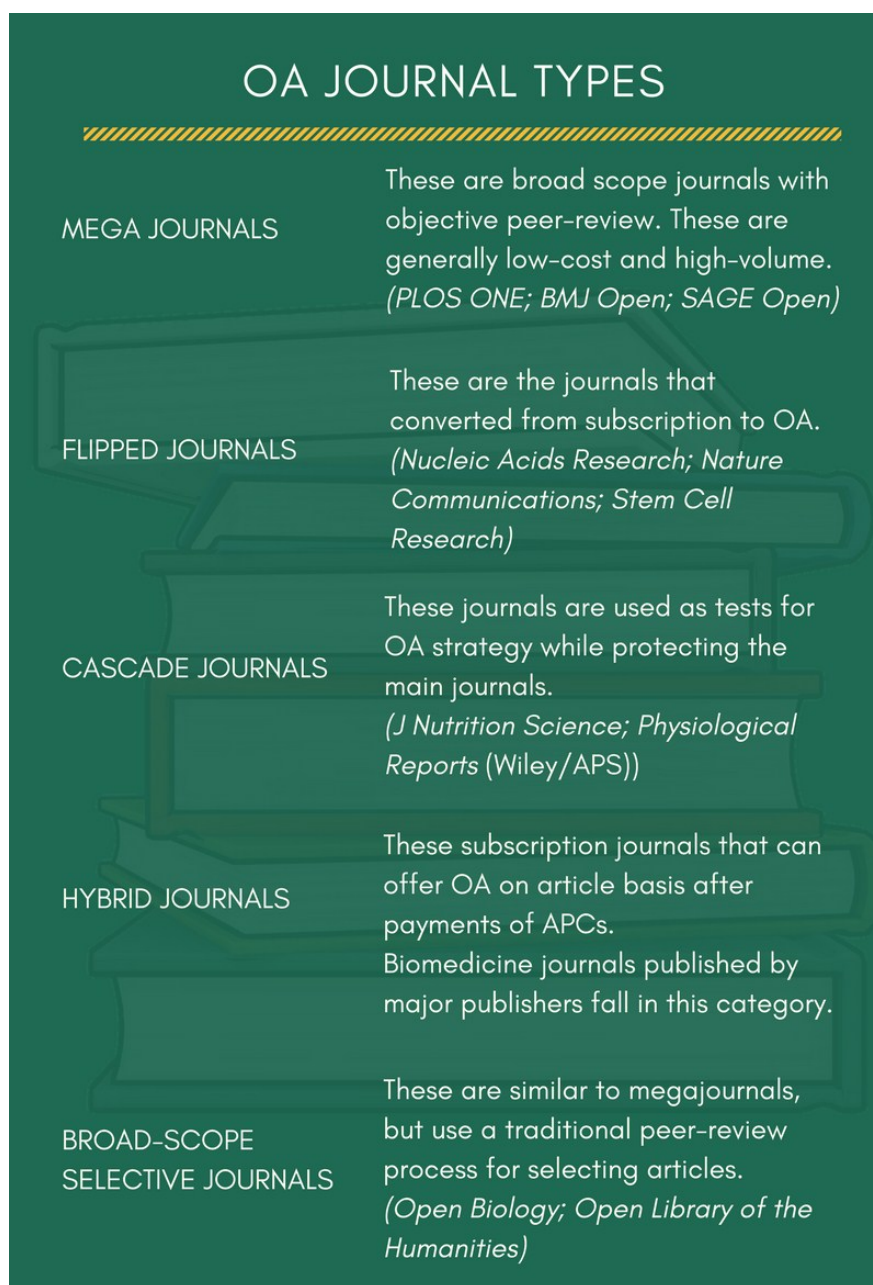
Open Access Types

GOLD	GREEN
<p>OUTLET</p> <p>Final publisher version of the articles is made open</p>	<p>OUTLET</p> <p>Authors self-archive articles (not final version) in an institutional or subject repository</p>
<p>FEES</p> <p>APC may apply</p>	<p>FEES</p> <p>No fees/charges are applicable</p>
<p>ACCESSIBILITY</p> <p>Article becomes OA without any embargo period</p>	<p>ACCESSIBILITY</p> <p>Article can be subject to embargo period by publisher</p>
<p>VARIANTS</p> <p>Hybrid: Final publisher version of the articles in a subscription-based journal are made OA immediately after APC or off-setting agreement</p> <p>APC: Final publisher version of the articles are made OA after APC; no subscription model</p> <p>No-APC: Final version of the articles published in fully open-access journals which do not charge an APC</p>	<p>VARIANTS</p> <p>Pre-print: Author's copy of the article before peer-review</p> <p>Post-print: Author's copy of the article after peer-review and before formatting by publisher</p>

In addition, publishers publish different types of OA journals based on the above business models.



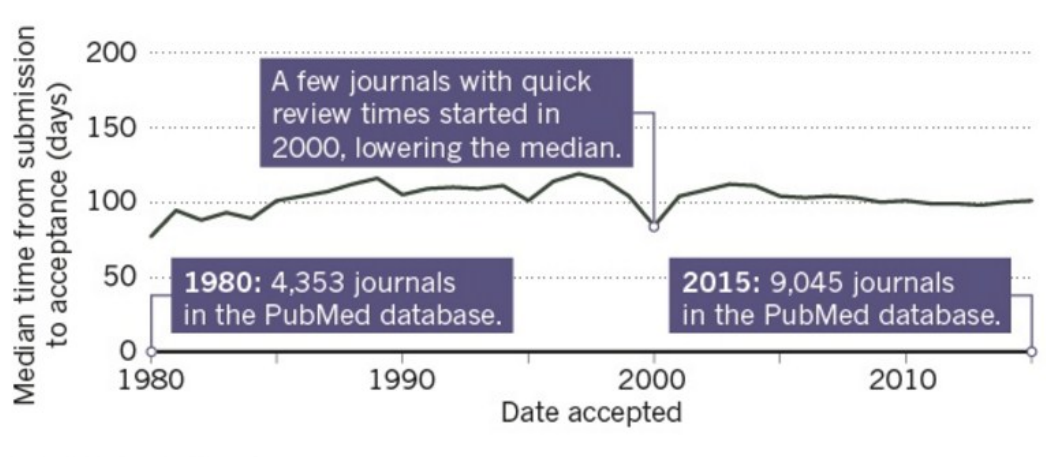
These options are publisher-specific and authors can choose appropriately (please refer to the infographic below).



Publication lag time and frequency of publication: Different journals have different lag times for acceptance (from the date of submission) and publication (from acceptance to print). This depends on the submission format and publication frequency. For example, rapid communications are published faster than original research or review articles.

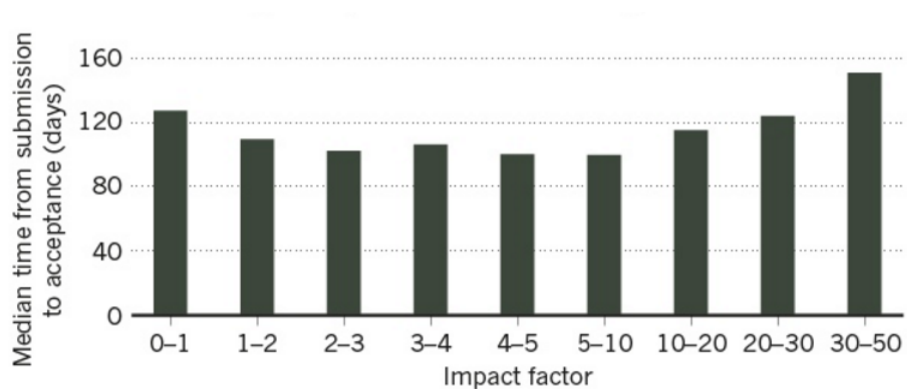


The frequency of a journal can be weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. The publication lag time for monthly journals is usually lesser than that for quarterly journals. However, the popularity of the journal (the number of articles waiting to be published) also plays a role here. In one of the reports, the publication time of all articles in PubMed till 2015 was evaluated [8]. The average time was found to be 100 days; however, for some journals it was higher.



Publication Time (Powell K. Does it take too long to publish research? [Internet]. 2016 [cited 31 July 2017]. Available from: <http://www.nature.com/news/does-it-take-too-long-to-publish-research-1.19320>)

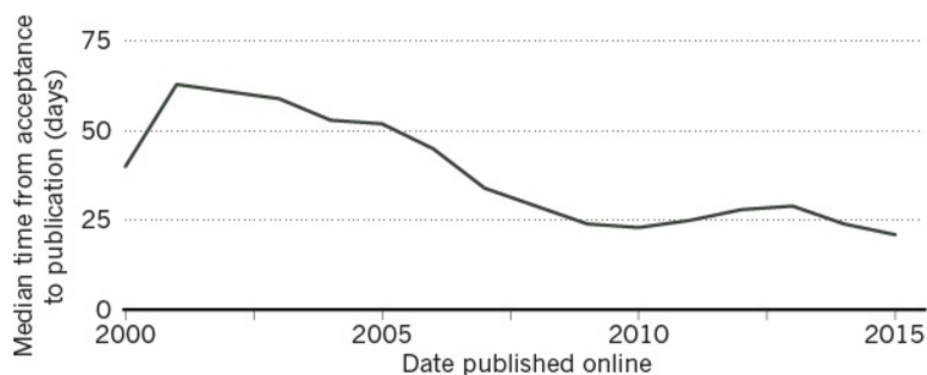
Interestingly, an analysis of papers published in PubMed in 2013 reported that the publication time was affected by the impact factor of the journal; higher impact factor journals took longer time from submission to acceptance [8].



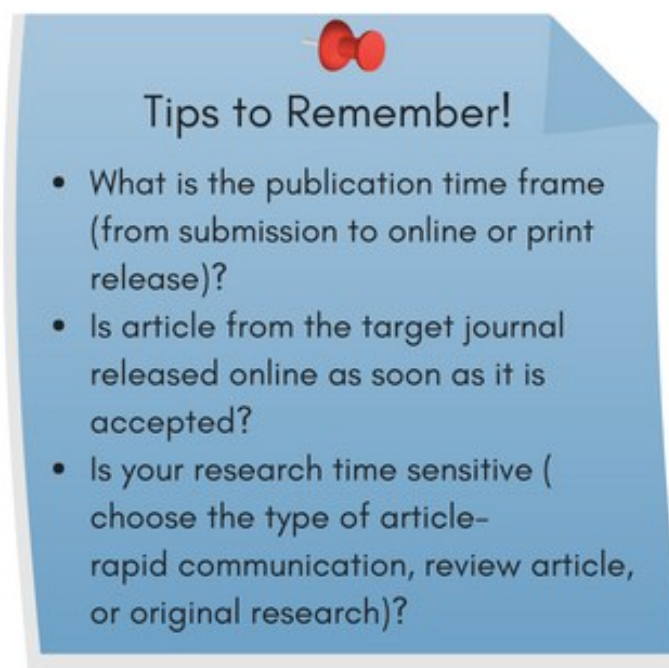
Publication Time and Journal Impact Factor (Powell K. Does it take too long to publish research? [Internet]. 2016 [cited 31 July 2017]. Available from: <http://www.nature.com/news/does-it-take-too-long-to-publish-research-1.19320>)



However, the same report concluded that the duration between acceptance and publication has reduced because of advancements in publishing technology.



Production Time (Powell K. Does it take too long to publish research? [Internet]. 2016 [cited 31 July 2017]. Available from: <http://www.nature.com/news/does-it-take-too-long-to-publish-research-1.19320>)



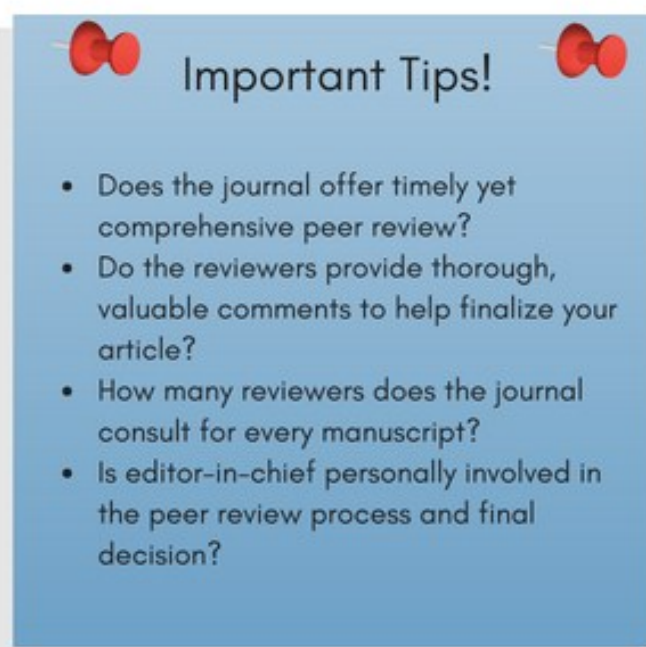
Quality of the journal: The quality of most journals is evaluated using different citation metrics. The quality and impact of the journal is usually apparent through wider readability and accessibility, citation rate, and its perception in the community.



The quality and impact can be quantified in terms of various widely accepted parameters, such as Impact Factor, [SCImago Journal Rank](#), SNIP, [5-year Impact Factor](#), Eigenfactor, Immediacy Index, and more. However, these citation metrics are not all-purpose indicators that determine the quality of the journal or the impact of its published research. One must assess the applicability and robustness of these indicators before coming to a conclusion. For instance, in the year following its publication in 1989, a supposedly revolutionary paper by Pons and Fleischmann was the most cited paper in the world. However, no one could reproduce the reported results. During the heyday of the cold fusion, anyone consulting journal impact factors would conclude that Pons and Fleischmann had written the most important paper of the year and the journal that published their paper was the most prestigious in the world [9].

Moreover, peer review is also considered one of the important criteria to assess the quality of the journal. It should be independent, rigorous, and unbiased. Peer

review as a process evaluates the submitted manuscripts on the grounds of originality, quality, novelty, and impact. It helps establish and maintain the quality of manuscripts published by a journal.



With the growth in OA output, many authors are falling to the predatory journals or publishers. Predatory journals are usually open access journals that make profits by offering fast-track publication of low-quality articles without following stringent editorial and peer-review processes. These journals thus affect the authenticity and credibility of the published research.

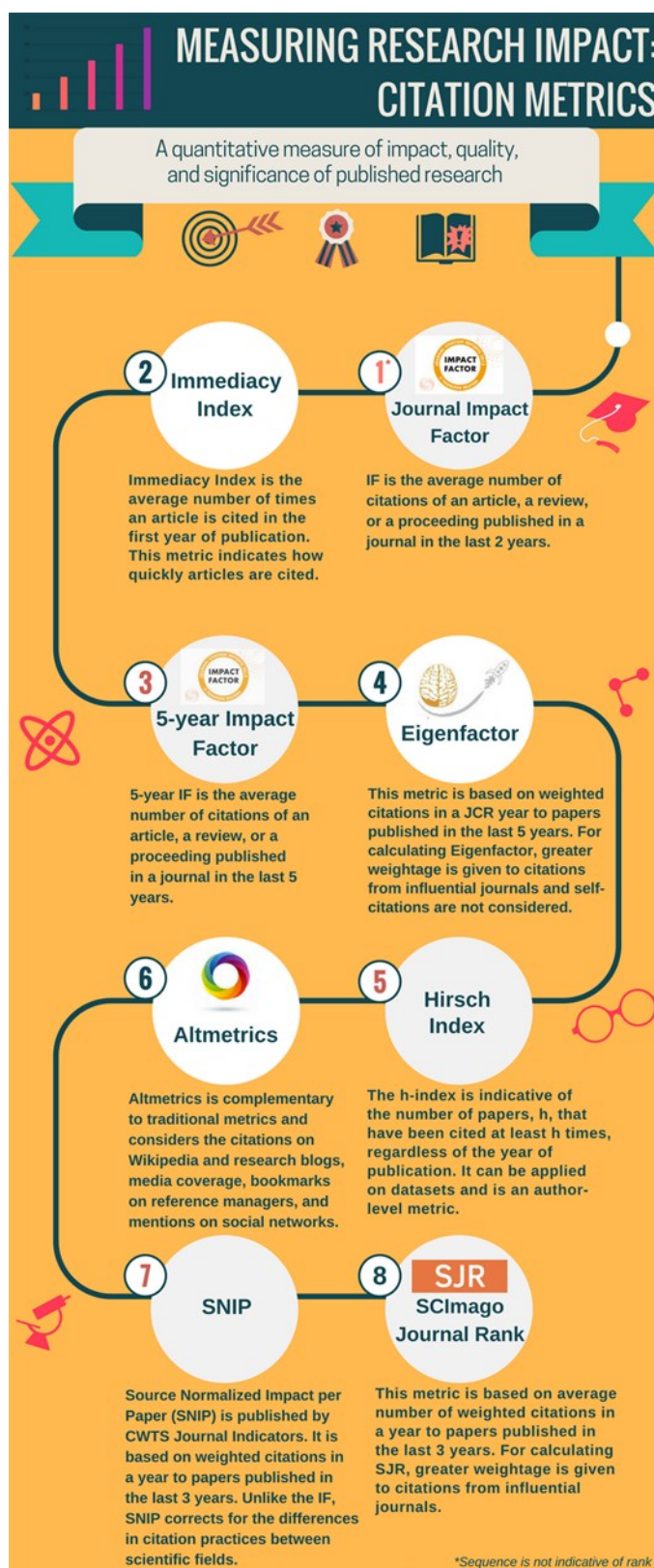


How to Identify Predatory Journals?

- Check if the title appears in Beall's (have been taken down for now)/ Cabell's list of predatory journals
- Unprofessional website with many errors
- Unclear or touched-up images
- Website home page that speaks directly to authors
- Uses Index Copernicus as index factor
- No description of the publishing process
- Asks for manuscripts to be submitted via email
- Promises quick turnaround and publication
- No retraction policy
- No information on how content will be preserved
- Unusually low or high APC
- Lack of copyright clarity
- Publisher/journal email is generic (e.g., Gmail)



Citation Metrics



Visit <https://www.enago.com/academy/measuring-research-impact-citation-metrics/> to view the infographic clearly



However, there have been instances of *citation stacking* among journals. When a family of journals owned by one publishing company takes the coercive citation model to the extreme, we meet a relatively new tactic called citation stacking. Because there are often multiple journals in the family, they are able to cite their own titles or other's titles to aggressively increase their respective impact factors. In Thomson Reuters' (TR) 2013 Journal Citation Report (JCR), 37 journals were suppressed for questionable citation activity, and 66 journals were banned completely for [citation stacking](#) after TR's new algorithm flagged the anomaly [10].

Abstracting & Indexing: The quality of the journal is also influenced by its discoverability in major abstracting and indexing services. Publishing in indexed journals is not a sure

way to enhance your career and generate citations. However, it is an important consideration when you decide where to submit your manuscript. More than 400 abstracting and indexing services help researchers locate research published online [11]. These services can be divided based on disciplines.

- Multi-disciplinary: Google; Thomson Reuters/ISI
- Discipline-specific: PubMed/Medline; ChemAbstracts; ADS; Scopus; Web of Science; IEEE Xplore; EMBASE; CiteSeerX; Zentralblatt für Mathematik

Step 4: Evaluate the Goal to Publish Your Research

To begin with, consider the ultimate goal in publishing the manuscript. Some examples of goals include the following:

- To influence clinicians' behavior: You can focus on journals with clinicians as the audience. As clinicians are busy people,

you should write a short article.

- To report details of a very specialized topic: You should focus on very specialized journals with specific circulation, albeit a smaller audience.



- To introduce an audience to a topic that people would not normally think or care about: Think about journals with a readership interested in the general topic of the manuscript (e.g., assessment) but who knows little about the focal topic (e.g., assessment of deaf children).
 - To get something into print that is worthwhile but not particularly sophisticated or influential, rather than never publish it at all: A less competitive journal may be a wise choice in this situation.
- Once you have got your goal in place, write down your desired characteristics, noting in each case whether a given journal on the list seems to be advantageous, disadvantageous, or neutral. This process should reduce the number of shortlisted journals by at least half.

Step 5: Review the Author Guidelines

The next step toward final journal selection is to read the journal's 'Author Guidelines.' Most journals post these guidelines to their website. Some publish these in every issue, others only once a year. Study that page for additional information that can further narrow down the list of journal options. The guidelines page may contain lists of topics that are welcomed or discouraged and information on page limits. This is a good page to find out more about the different types of manuscripts the journal publishes (e.g., some journals do not publish book reviews).

Do check for the following while going through the instructions:

- Does it accept theoretical or applied research?
- Does it have a high article processing charge?
- What is the manuscript word limit?
- Is there a set template for formatting manuscripts?
- Are there any other specific formatting requirements?
- What is the number of citations accepted?
- What is the preferred citation style?



Step 6: Final Choice: You Are Almost There!

By now, you have all the information you need to make a decision. If the final choice is not yet obvious, it may be helpful to [contact the journal editor](#) to discuss the nature of the intended submission and whether or not the editor thinks it is appropriate for the publication. Send the editor a brief email describing the essential features of the proposed manuscript and ask if the journal would be an appropriate platform for a submission. This letter is different from a cover letter that you need to write when a manuscript is being submitted. Some important points to include in this letter are:

- Manuscript title
- Article type
- Target audience
- Estimated number of words
- Brief summary (single paragraph)

After a final decision has been made on the most appropriate journal for submission, you are now ready to start writing your manuscript. Ensure that the manuscript conforms to the characteristics, style, and preferences of the chosen journal. Finally, follow the author guidelines carefully.





Tips to Improve Your Paper's Visibility

- Strong and structured article: Word count reduction recommended (e.g., "Write a strong and structured article – Clear title, concise abstract, relevant keywords, etc.) This ensures higher visibility because of search engine optimization (SEO).
- Decide on the right journal: Make sure to choose a right journal to reach out to the right audience for your research. This increases your visibility and chances of citation.
- Cite others' work: Citing peers' or colleagues' work that is similar or contrary to yours. Cite experts in your field.
- Keep a uniform name on all your papers: Use ORCID as a unique identifier to distinguish yourself from others and maintain your publication database.
- Promote your research: Share your research on relevant platforms like conference, meetings or discussion forums. You can also use social media outlets like ORCID, LinkedIn, Twitter etc. Be mindful of the copyright licensing if you have already published your paper in a journal.



Overview: Tools to Find the Right Journal

The process of selecting the appropriate journal has become increasingly complex because of the proliferation of journals, areas of specialization, and emergence of interdisciplinary topics. Authors have to optimize several criteria and overcome constraints before reaching a decision about where to publish. Choosing the right journal often increases the odds of acceptance. Thus, it is important to match your manuscript optimally to the goals and characteristics of the journal. Researchers often feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of journals available to publish their research. However, several online tools/platforms can help researchers streamline the process and narrow down the options.





Finding the Right Journal: Tools at a Glance

findMyJournal

FindMyJournal™ helps researchers select the most appropriate journal to publish their manuscript in. It uses a mathematical and objective algorithm to shortlist the best-matched journals.

Open Access Journal Finder

Powered By **enago**
Author First. Quality First.

Enago Open Access Journal Finder helps in finding OA journals that are pre-vetted to eliminate predatory publishers. It solves common issues on predatory journals, journal authenticity, and APCs by utilizing a validated journal index provided by DOAJ.



THINK

CHECK

SUBMIT

Think. Check. Submit. is a campaign to help researchers identify trusted journals for their research. It is a simple checklist researchers can use to assess the credentials of a journal or publisher.

DOAJ
DIRECTORY OF
OPEN ACCESS
JOURNALS

The Directory of Open Access Journals, launched in 2003 at Lund University, Sweden, contains ca. 9000 open access journals covering all areas of science, technology, medicine, social science, and humanities.

Scopus®

Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings. It provides a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities.



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In this section, we have shared some common questions early-stage researchers have when they are preparing their manuscripts for publication. Here, we discuss authorship-related issues, identifying journal requirements, tools for literature review, and similar topics.

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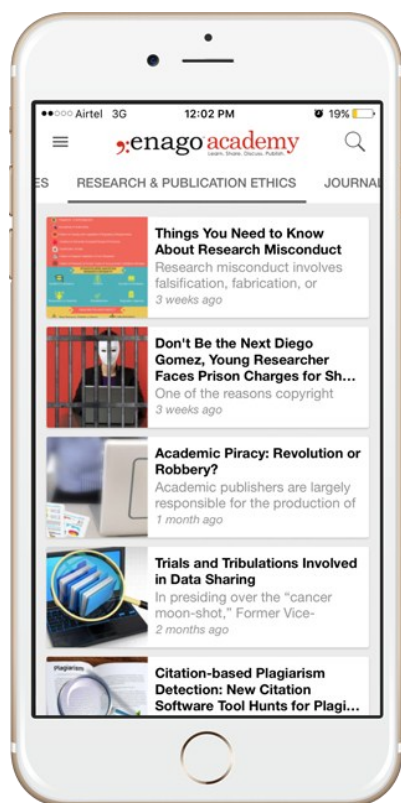
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