

How to Choose a Journal

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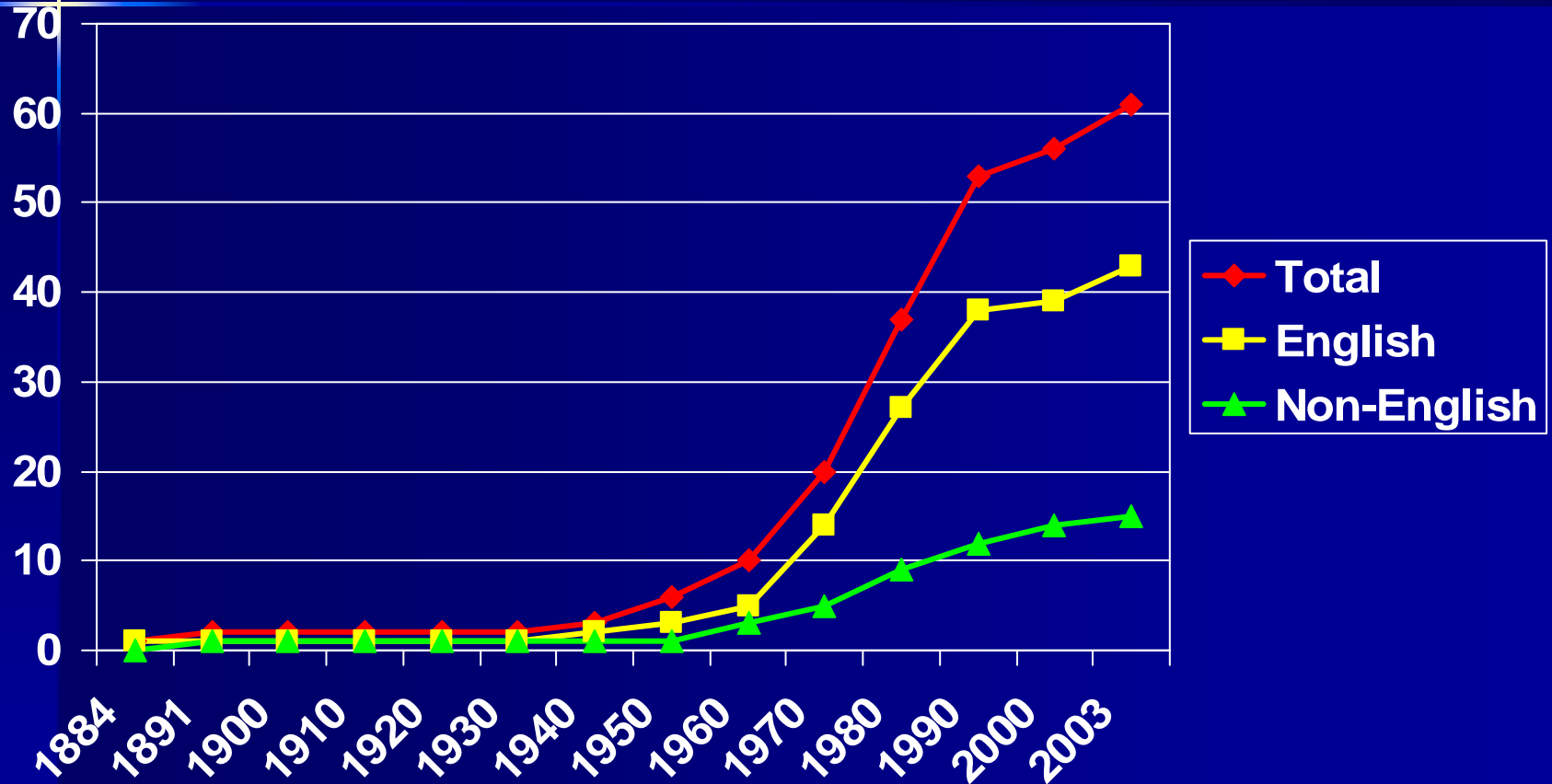
What is the Role of a Scientific Journal?

- provides a forum for communication among scientists
- sets intellectual standards in a field
- sets the agenda for what to study
- provides an institutional memory of a field
- brings information to the public
- certifies the author's work is authentic
- can advance the author's career
(Lafollette, 1992)

The plethora of journals to choose from

- Over 75 peer-reviewed addiction journals
- Many more disciplinary journals publish addiction articles
- How does one make an informed choice?

Cumulative Number of Addiction Journals Published Since 1884



Questions to answer in choosing a journal

1. National or international audience?
2. Language?
3. Disciplinary or addiction specialty journals?
4. The journal's content area/culture?
5. Exposure opportunities?
6. Chances of acceptance?
7. What about the impact factor?
8. Practical matters (time to publication, etc.)

1. National or international audience?

Is the topic relevant to a particular national audience, such as clinicians, basic scientists or policymakers? Does it present data that is primarily of local or national interest? If so, consider a journal whose audience or language is national in scope

OR

Does the article deal with universal biological, psychological or sociological themes that are relevant to scientists or practitioners all over the world? If so, consider an international journal or a well-indexed English language journal.

To find out about the journal's focus:
READ its mission statement, look at content and evaluate its editorial board

2. Which language?

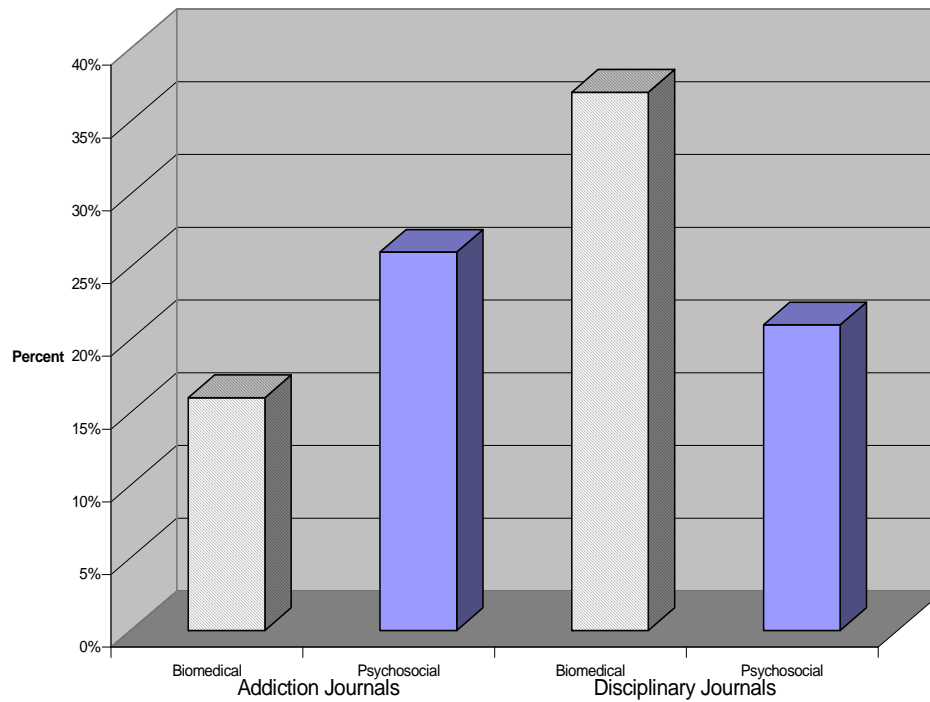
- For international audience: English is probably the language of choice
- Option: Publish in several languages (with editors' permission)
- For national audiences: publish in the language of the country

3. Disciplinary or addiction specialty journal?

- Sometimes it is easier to get an addiction article published in an addiction journal
- In some countries with no specialty journal, other channels have to be considered, such as the national disciplinary journals
- Addiction scientists benefit from contact with other ("mother") sciences, so disciplinary journals are important
- Some disciplinary journals have more prestige than specialty journals

If you are not sure about where to submit:
contact the editor

Percentage of 2001 journal articles on alcohol published in addiction journals and disciplinary journals, classified as either biomedical or psychosocial subject matter



4. Consider the journal's content area and culture

- Consult mission statement for topics, goals, policy, audience
- Get acquainted with the journal's "format" for articles, subject matter, methodological rigor, etc
- See who is on the editorial board

Substances covered in addiction journals

- English language (N=48):
 - Alcohol: 93 %
 - Drugs: 83 %
 - Tobacco: 62 %
 - Other: 35 %
- Other languages (N=17)
 - Alcohol: 94 %
 - Drugs: 94 %
 - Tobacco: 82 %
 - Other: 64 %

Topic areas in addiction journals

English language: (n=48)

- Treatment: 87 %
- Prev. & policy: 91 %
- Epidemiology: 70 %
- Biology: 45 %
- History: 62 %
- Religion, spirituality: 29 %
- Other: 37 %

Other languages: (n=17)

- Treatment: 100 %
- Prev. & policy: 100 %
- Epidemiology: 82 %
- Biology: 76 %
- History: 58 %
- Religion, spirituality: 23 %
- Other: 58 %

5. What is the journal's exposure?

- Does it reach your specific audience: researchers, clinicians, basic scientists, policymakers?
- Perhaps members of a certain professional society?
- How available is the journal in the important libraries?
- Consider print circulation: among English language journals, circulation varies: 250 - 25 000; among non-English journals: 400 - 3 200
- Abstracting and indexing services recording the journal: great variation, but generally larger among English language journals
- Impact factor: Only available for English language journals

6. Consider your chances of being accepted?

- Acceptance rates: English language: 15 - 95%, non-English: 25 - 100%
- Note: many journals do not know their acceptance rates or do not want to state them
- Acceptance depends on quality and style of the article and administrative resources of the journal (some journals may help with text and language editing)

7. Consider, but do not be fooled by, the Journal Impact Factor (JIF)

- JIF is determined by the frequency at which articles in that journal were cited
- high impact journals have more prestige, but JIF depends on other things, like number of co-authors and indexing
- non-English journals are at a disadvantage
- number of databases indexing the journal will determine who sees abstract of article

The Journal Impact Factor

- The average citation frequency for articles published in a journal, or how many times, on average, during the study year the articles that appeared the 2 preceding years of that journal received citations in other (ISI) indexed journals

8. Consider these practical aspects:

- How long to get the article peer reviewed?
- How long between acceptance and publication?
- Geographical distribution (i.e. penetration outside US and Europe)
- Special audiences
- How much editorial support does it give?

The Matthew effect

Take advantage of the choices available to publish your work!

"For unto everyone that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath"

The Matthew Effect for Journals

- *Prominent journals receive more credit than they deserve, less prominent ones receive less than they deserve*
- Abuse of the journal impact factor (JIF) and the dominance of some journals threatens the smaller and non-English language journals

The Importance of Diversity

- “Addiction is a field in which it is difficult to conduct research with the level of control one would wish, because of practical and ethical constraints” (West & McIlwaine, 2002)
- This leads to genuine disagreement about measures and research designs
- Addiction research is multi-disciplinary which will foster disagreements about the importance of particular findings

Conclusions

- There are many opportunities
- Choose your publication channel wisely
- Improve the quality of publishing by making all journals compete for your best articles