

Communicating with Co-Authors about Manuscripts and Abstracts: Recommended Best Practices

February 27, 2024

Research publications are the result of a collaborative process. The responsibility of the primary/first author is not only to lead the delegating of the writing process but also to keep all co-authors informed about the status of the abstract/manuscript, including submission, acceptance, and publication. Corresponding authors, if different, should also keep in mind the best practices outlined here.

Essential Steps / Key take-aways

Abstracts

- Send draft version with enough time for comments; avoid last minute.
- Send final version to all co-authors along with confirmation details.
- Notify co-authors of acceptance or rejection.
- If accepted:
 - 1) Inform co-authors and include a CV-ready citation.
 - 2) Notify the CSPH communication specialist.

Manuscripts

- Where appropriate, allow co-authors to contribute to specific sections on early drafts.
- When submitting, send to all co-authors: Final version of the manuscript; Confirmation details of the submission.
- After receiving notification of manuscript acceptance:
 - 1) Inform co-authors and include a CV-ready citation.
 - 2) Notify the CSPH communication specialist.
- After publication, provide co-authors with PDF or link and an updated CV-ready citation.

Determining Authorship

As part of the Center for Surgery and Public Health's (CSPH) mission to advance the science of surgery through research that informs policy and program development for safe, high quality, and equitable, patient-centered care, CSPH is committed to fair and equitable determination of authorship and opportunities for authorship. Authorship must give an honest accounting of the contributions of all members of the research team and reflect our integrity as a research center. Please refer to the [CSPH authorship guidelines](#) as informed by the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) when determining your preliminary list of authorship preferably before project start.

Abstracts

Abstract Preparation and Submission

Before submitting an abstract to a conference, one should have discussed, provided opportunity for input, and received confirmation from all co-authors regarding the final draft of the abstract.

When circulating drafts of abstracts for review, they should be as close to finished as possible. In many cases, you may ask one or more co-authors to contribute to early drafts. For example, biostatisticians may be asked to write some of the methods. The senior author should edit/comment before circulating to others. Include relevant tables, figures, and attachments. **Do not wait until the last minute to distribute abstracts.** Co-authors should have at least 48 hours to review.

A final version of the abstract should be sent to all co-authors for their records along with confirmation details of the submission. Please also include CV-ready citations. This allows co-authors to track their own products and to confirm their place in the author list. Do not forget to acknowledge CSPH and the funding source.

Notification of Decision:

Whether your abstract is accepted or rejected, promptly inform co-authors, including any known reasons for the rejection. If accepted, include an updated CV-ready citation.

Notice of Publication

When your abstract is published online or in print, share the following with your co-authors and communications specialist: 1) a copy of the word document or PDF of the accepted abstract and 2) an updated citation if necessary.

Manuscripts

Manuscript Preparation and Submission

Authors write! Early drafts of manuscripts may be circulated to a subset of co-authors for contributions. For example, biostatisticians may be asked to write some of the methods. Other co-authors may be asked for specific contributions, such as data-gathering techniques or survey development. You may wish to select a target journal at some point to ensure that formatting is correct. The senior author should edit/comment before circulating a near-ready full draft to others.

When circulating full drafts of manuscripts for review, they should be as close to finished as possible. Be sure to include **abstract and author list** (author order may be alphabetical at early stage). Include all tables and attachments. Provide co-authors with a reasonable time to review and send comments/edits (e.g., 5-10 days). Set a date and remind everyone 2 days ahead of the date.

Before submitting a manuscript for publication, one should have discussed, provided opportunity for input, and received confirmation from all co-authors regarding: 1) the final draft of the manuscript; 2) target journal; and 2) the timing of the submission. A final version of the submitted manuscript should be sent to all co-authors for their records along with confirmation details of the submission. Usually the journal makes a PDF available. Include CV-ready citations. This allows co-authors to track their own products and to confirm their place in the author list. Do not forget to acknowledge CSPH and the funding source.

Revise and Resubmit Process

If the journal invites a “revise and resubmit,” inform co-authors of the request and circulate the draft response to review for co-author input and approval prior to resubmitting, ensuring adequate time for co-authors to respond (ideally 5-10 workdays). As above, a final version of the re-submitted manuscript should be sent to all co-authors for their records along with confirmation details of the submission.

Rejection

If your manuscript is rejected, promptly inform co-authors, including any known reasons for the rejection, and plans for resubmission including journal targets.

Acceptance

When your manuscript is accepted, promptly inform co-authors. Include the “in press” or “accepted” citation (complete authorship list in standard Harvard CV format, title, journal, acceptance date), and the anticipated publication date if known. When available, provide a copy of the manuscript final proof. Consider your dissemination strategy and discuss with co-authors. This includes the creation of dissemination supporting materials (e.g., visual abstract, infographic) and whether you will be pursuing additional media support from CPHS and Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Please send this content along with 3-5 key messages from the manuscript to the CPHS communications specialist. If your article is selected, BWH Office of Strategic Communication requires at least 2 weeks’ notice to develop a press release or research brief.

Notice of Publication

When your article is published online or in print, share the following with your co-authors and communications specialist: 1) a copy of the word document or PDF of the accepted manuscript and 2) an updated citation.

The timeline between acceptance and online publication is often short. Please continue to follow up with the publishing journal for definitive information regarding embargo/publications dates so that you, your co-authors, and supporting communications teams can optimally support your publication’s dissemination.