

# How to get published in *Tobacco Control's* Low & Middle Income pages: tips from the editors

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Ruth Malone  
Editor



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LMIC Commissioning  
Editor

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# About Tobacco Control

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- First published in 1992
  - World's first specialised journal in tobacco control field
  - 6 issues per year
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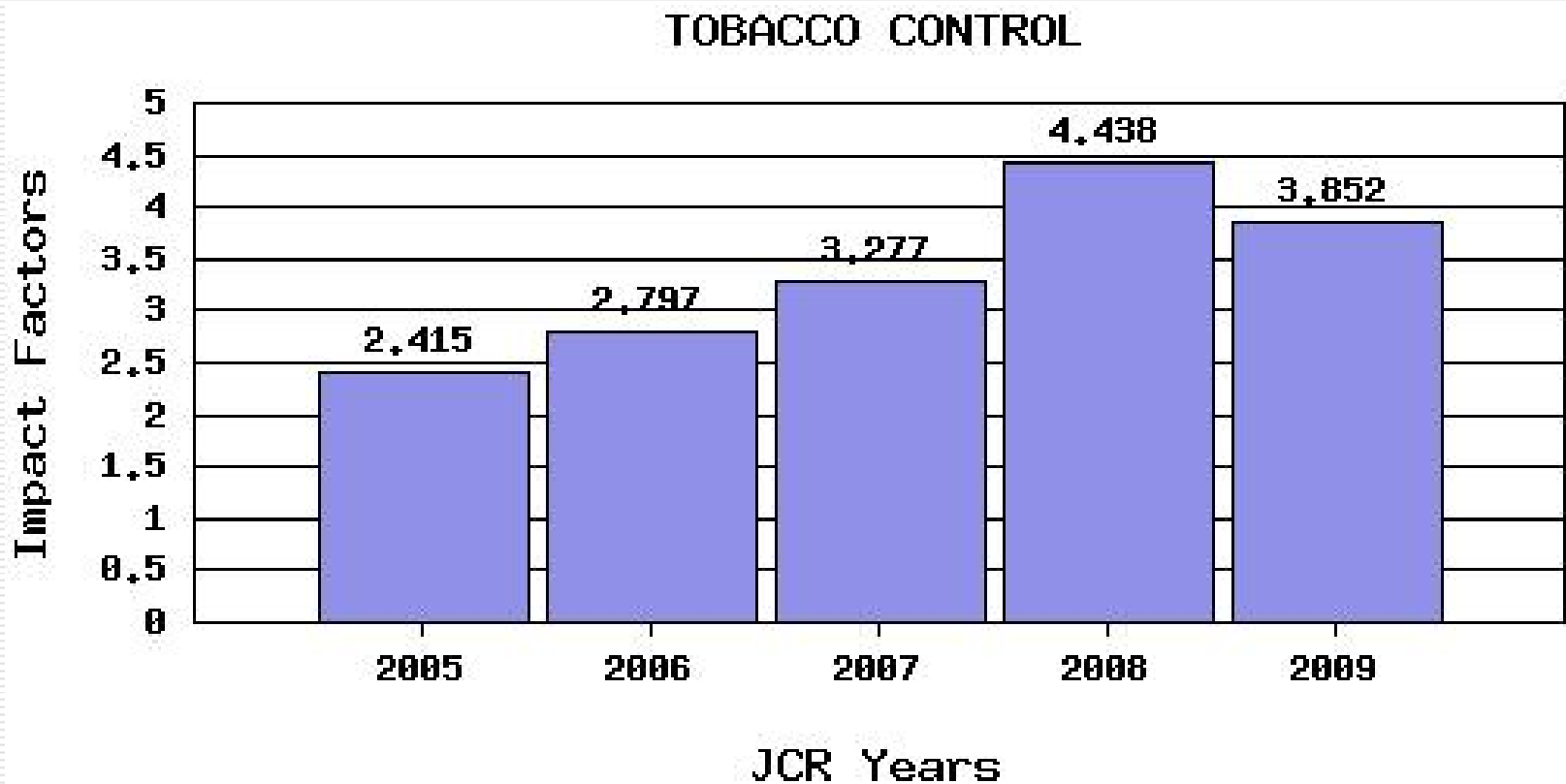
## #12/122 highest impact factor in ISI Science Edition 2009 in public health

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- Ann Rev Public Health: 7.915
  - Am J Epidemiol: 5.589
  - Am J Public Health: 4.371
  - Tob Control: 3.852
  - Addiction: 3.842
  - Eur J Epidem 3.718
  - Cancer Causes & Control: 3.199
  - Prev Med: 3.172
  - Nicotine & Tob Res: 2.557
-

# Impact factor trend

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# Bloomberg Philanthropy/Gates grant

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- ❑ 2009-2011
  - ❑ Low, Lower-Middle, Upper Middle
  - ❑ Turkey = Upper Middle
  - ❑ Minimum of 16pp to LMIC papers in each issue
  - ❑ Approx 4pp per paper. Thus: 24 extra papers each year
  - ❑ Also: Support for scientific & strategic mentoring
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# Submissions from most LMICs very low 2001-2009: total submissions 2547

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- USA: 989
  - Australia: 228
  - UK: 205
  - Canada: 135
  - Sweden: 35
  - Taiwan: 59
  - India: 44
  - China: 34
  - Thailand: 12
  - Pakistan: 10
  - Indonesia: 3
  - Cambodia: 2
  - Vietnam: 2
  - Bangladesh: 2
  - Lao PDR: 1
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# Submissions from most LMICs very low 2001-2009: acceptances

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- USA: 989/378 (38.2)
  - Australia: 228/150 (65.7)
  - UK: 205/68 (33.2)
  - Canada: 135/40 (29.6)
  - Sweden: 35/9 (25.7)
  - Taiwan: 59/17 (28.8)
  - India: 44/1 (2.3)
  - China: 34/5 (14.7)
  - Thailand: 12/3 (25)
  - Pakistan: 10/0 (0)
  - Indonesia: 3/1 (33.3)
  - Cambodia: 2/1 (50)
  - Vietnam: 2/0 (0)
  - Bangladesh: 2/0 (0)
  - Lao PDR: 1/0 (0)
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# What sort of papers do we run?

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- Original articles (quantitative AND qualitative)
  - 3500w
  - Brief reports (1500w)
  - Letters (600w – 1 table/graph – 10 references)
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# Is your paper a paper, a brief or a research letter?

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- Easier to get letters & briefs accepted (space). They are indexed!
  - Decide whether you should submit it as a brief or letter
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# What sort of papers do we run? Not just research ..

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- Reviews (systematic)
  - Commentaries
  - Special communications
  - Ad Watch
  - Industry Watch
  - Advocacy in action
  - News analysis
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# What is our focus?

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- ❑ Tobacco Control
  - ❑ Population health – not clinical focus unless it has population application
  - ❑ Will this paper assist policy-makers and practitioners with a population focus in their understanding and decision-making?
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# TOBACCO CONTROL

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## Make Direct Contact



# The first hurdle: limited space, therefore strong competition

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- ❑ We publish 6 x year
  - ❑ Av 10 papers/issue
  - ❑ max ie 60/year from 420 submissions ie 14% acceptance rate on current submissions!
  - ❑ Size of issue (eg: more papers) won't increase till economics improves (ie more subscribers to pay for higher costs involved in bigger issues)
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# What are we looking for?

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- What's known about this issue?
  - What does this paper add?
  - So what? Who cares? Does it matter?
  - International implications?
  - Potential impact on policy
  - Originality? *Interesting!*
  - Likely press/media interest?
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# What sort of papers do we give **low priority** to?

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- ❑ Basic science (send to NTR & other journals)
  - ❑ Disease epidemiology (esp small, well known)
  - ❑ Local, small smoking prevalence studies – including in special populations
  - ❑ Knowledge/attitudes studies
  - ❑ Predictors of smoking/predictors of quitting studies
  - ❑ Small, clinical smoking cessation interventions
  - ❑ Replications of well-known interventions (eg: sales to minors monitoring; quit & win)
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# Reject without review?

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- Inappropriately sent to our journal
  - "Sermons" about evils of tobacco
  - Obviously poor studies (methods etc)
  - Material more suitable for local journals
  - Descriptions of implementation without results, critical analysis
  - Most prevalence papers
  - Very boring papers
  - Rants from crazies!
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# WHY PAPERS ARE REJECTED: scientific

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- unclear hypotheses
  - poor or weak design
  - sample biased or too small
  - statistics inappropriate or misapplied
  - conclusions unjustified
  - Causal conclusions from cross-sectional data
  - references outdated/authors not up with current debate
-

# WHY PAPERS ARE REJECTED:

## presentation/style

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- poorly organized
  - badly written
  - careless errors
  - Terrible, multiple tables
  - needless/endless figures
  - outdated or improperly cited references
  - Too "ABC"
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# We are a specialist journal...

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- ❑ Cut to the chase!
  - ❑ Do not waste time with elementary ABC introductory sections -- it is being read by people who know the field
  - ❑ locate your paper precisely in what has gone before & explain how your work takes it further
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# Preliminaries: Abstract & Title

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- structure abstract if so required
  - make it tell the whole story
  - tell it well; may be all that is seen
  - It WILL influence editor
  - title: choose with care (not too clever)
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# PROCRASTINATE

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- pass it around
  - comments from co-authors
  - seek criticism from colleagues
  - get mentor's advice
  - put it away for awhile
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# POLISH

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## accuracy, brevity, clarity, grace

- ❑ revise, revise, and revise for:
  - ❑ accuracy: spelling, figures differ in tables and text; too many decimals
  - ❑ brevity: empty phrases and words; excessive weak verbs and connectives
  - ❑ clarity: first person; basic grammar
  - ❑ grace: choice of words; vary sentences
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# PARSIMONY

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- ❑ make it “lean and mean” -- make every word justify its existence
  - ❑ check word limit; do word count
  - ❑ even if o.k., shorter is (almost) always better
  - ❑ cut all extra words, phrases, paragraphs
  - ❑ prune, prune, prune
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# PERSUADE

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- covering letter to editor
  - explain why your paper is special
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# Been previously rejected by another journal?

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- DO send the reviewers' comments, + a letter showing how you've addressed changes to the new journal editor
  - ANTICIPATE YOUR REVIEWERS
  - Who has published recently in this journal on a related topic?
  - What are their preoccupations?
  - Can you cite their work?
-

# PERSIST

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- revise promptly as requested
  - resubmit
  - push and explain
  - choose another journal
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# ALWAYS REMEMBER...

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**Journals need  
papers (almost  
as much) as  
authors need  
journals**

**Editors want their  
journals to be  
read and their  
papers to be  
cited**

