

Nurse Author & Editor

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INANE Editor Best Practices

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NURSE AUTHOR & EDITOR, 2017, 27(1), 1

INTRODUCTION

Nurse editors are a specialized group of professionals who have dedicated a portion of their time and resources to ensuring that nursing science of the highest quality is disseminated to their readers. Moreover, nurse editors come from a variety of backgrounds and bring an even wider range of experiences. Despite these differences, nurse editors may share similar circumstances in their roles. As such, it is important to identify and learn from each other's experiences in striving to overcome common challenges and barriers pertaining to journal growth and improvement.

PURPOSE

The major purposes of this study were to identify best practices of nurse editors associated with the International Academy of Nurse Editors (INANE) and determine major challenges associated with their role.

METHODS

In this cross-sectional descriptive study, the authors created a 32-item survey in REDCap (Harris et al., 2009) derived from a literature review and discussions with other nurse editors. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the University of Cincinnati prior to the survey launch. During the month of May, 2016, the survey was sent to all INANE members via email addresses found on the INANE listserv. Questions on the survey focused on basic journal information, editor demographics and editor responsibilities, top qualities of editors and editorial board members, challenges or ethical issues encountered, and social media usage. In total, 33 nurse editors from across the globe completed the survey. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize major findings.

RESULTS

Table 1 provides an overview of editor demographics and highlights how many have been mentored in their role and have a wealth of experience guiding their efforts.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants ($n = 33$)

Age	Range 43-75, Mean 61 years
Gender	100% female, 0 male
Mentored as Editor	21 (64%)
Prior Associate Editor	23 (69%)
Average Time as Editor	9.5 years

Over 96% of the journals were characterized as society journals and 94% were published both online and in print. Only two journals were published solely online. On average, journals published eight issues per year (range 4-12), and had 89 pages per issue (range 16-225). First time submissions averaged 222 in 2014 and 231 in 2015. Foreign submissions averaged 83 per year. The average rejection rate was 50% in 2014 and 53% in 2015. Journal editors also reported the following requirements for preparation guidelines: CONSORT (36%), PRISMA (27%), SQUIRE (24%), and CARE (6%).

Seventy-five percent of the editors have dealt with recurrent ethical issues. Plagiarism is overwhelmingly the most persistent ethical concern. Other than ethical issues, some of the greatest challenges faced by nurse editors include resources (financial and personal), obtaining an adequate number of high quality submissions, finding qualified and timely reviewers, an increasing number of foreign submissions, attracting the correct type of submissions, and maintaining a social media presence. The reported top 10 highly valued qualities of editorial board members are: submits detailed reviews, is experienced, has a strong commitment to the journal, is recognized as a content expert and/or leader, solicits manuscripts, guides the direction of the journal, provides creative and constructive feedback, serves as mentor for authors, submits timely reviews, and writes for the journal.

Keeping editorial board members engaged is another prevalent issue for most editors. Table 2 lists their most common as well as creative strategies for keeping them engaged.

Table 2. Best Strategies to Keep Editorial Board Members Engaged

Most Common	Creative Approaches
Editorial Board Conference Calls	Using Online Discussion Board
Regular Emails and Communication	Sending Out Annual Reports
Annual Board Meeting	Initiating and Maintaining Personal Relationships
Invitations to Review Manuscripts	Creating an E-Newsletter
Meeting at Conferences	Dashboard of Progress
Expressing Gratitude and Appreciation	Reimbursement for Meeting Attendance
Requests for Suggestions and Support	Providing Lunch During Meetings
Limiting the Number of Review Requests	Allowing Editorial Board Members to be Responsible for a Journal Department/Section

Regarding social media presence, Facebook ($n = 20$) was the most commonly used outlet, followed by Twitter ($n = 11$), LinkedIn ($n = 10$), YouTube ($n = 6$), Instagram ($n = 1$), and Tumblr ($n = 1$).

DISCUSSION

Clearly, there are many common themes and issues expressed by the nursing journal editors. While editors are highly experienced and heavily rely on the quality of submissions and the judgment of their editorial board members, obtaining a sufficient number of high quality submissions continues to be an ongoing challenge. Going forward, nurse editors must focus on coordinated efforts to consistently attract high quality submissions as well as more skilled and committed reviewers. It is apparent the average age of nurse editors reflects the aging trend of registered nurses in the United States. Renewed efforts must be made to attract younger nurses into the roles of nurse editor, associate editor, and/or editorial board member.

Given that receiving high quality submissions is the most important challenge nurse editors face, having clearly written and updated author guidelines is essential. Plus, nurse editors must continuously solicit manuscripts and encourage nursing scholarship.

Ethical concerns, particularly plagiarism, continue to be an issue. All journals are encouraged to use an online anti-plagiarism software program. Use of such software can be especially useful for journals struggling with adequate resources. Forewarning authors about the use of anti-plagiarism software at the time of submission also serves as a deterrent.

Most editors struggle with adequate resources (financial and personal). This is a common struggle, even among journals outside of the nursing profession. However, considering the vital nature of journals as a primary means of disseminating nursing knowledge (and thus advancing the profession), sharing ideas about how to increase access to resources should be a priority.

Due to the increasing prevalence of social media, editors and journals need to be astute to the capabilities and challenges of social media and hire staff who are familiar with this medium. Younger nurses and other professionals tend to have more experience and knowledge regarding the use of social media as an advertising and dissemination tool (Moorley & Chinn, 2016; Farrelly, 2014). By involving younger nurses in different journal operations (such as improving social media presence), editors may gain fresh perspectives on issues pertinent to their journals and will have younger nurses to cultivate as future editors, associate editors, editorial board members, and/or reviewers.

An additional prominent responsibility of an editor and critical to the success and sustainability of any journal is keeping editorial board members and reviewers engaged and productive. Results from this study identify common and creative

strategies to maintain engagement, and emphasized the importance of keeping these strategies at the forefront of the editor's thoughts and actions. Any successes with implementation of new, creative, or innovative ways to maintain engagement and productivity should be shared with all other nurse editors in order to strengthen all nursing journals.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study identifies issues regularly confronted by editors. In this study, the quality of submissions was the greatest challenge followed by obtaining and keeping excellent reviewers, and addressing ethical concerns. Key areas of focus should be manuscript acquisitions, maintaining a high quality and engaged editorial board, fighting the proliferation of plagiarism, and focusing on maintaining a higher presence on social media.

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