How to Write, Review and Edit for Child Maltreatment

Vincent J. Palusci, MD, MS, Bri Stormer, MSW
Daniel Whitaker, PhD, Rochelle Hanson, PhD
APSAC Colloquium  July 15, 2021  1430-1600

Abstract

- Child Maltreatment (CM) is the official journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC).
- CM's objective:
  - to foster professional excellence in the field of child abuse and neglect by reporting current and at-issue scientific information and technical innovations in a form immediately useful to practitioners and researchers from mental health, child protection, law, law enforcement, medicine, nursing, and allied disciplines.
- Continually exploring ways to:
  - enhance the quality of CM's articles
  - advance the science of the field,
  - educate those who write, review and edit articles.
- Target Audience: Professionals at all career stages
  - Early career scientists will particularly value what they learn about successfully publishing in CM, as well as steps to becoming a reviewer and an editor.

Objectives

1. Briefly review the history, aims and scope of the APSAC journal Child Maltreatment, including effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. Discuss the policies and process for article management and the role of the editors, consulting editors and student editors in editorial policy and process, including efforts to address diversity, inclusion and equity;
3. Explore how to successfully write, review and edit:
   1. How to publish in CM
   2. How to become a reviewer
   3. How to suggest and lead a special issue
   4. How to get on the Editorial Board (and student EB)
   5. How to read, interpret, and apply findings from CM articles for practice and policy making

Presenters

- Vincent J. Palusci
  - Editor in Chief, Child Maltreatment
  - Editorial Board member Child Abuse & Neglect, Pediatric Radiology
  - Former Associate Editor Child Abuse Review
- Daniel Whitaker
  - Past Editor in Chief, Child Maltreatment
- Bri Stormer
  - Editorial Assistant, Child Maltreatment
  - Director of Publications and Member Services, APSAC
- Rochelle Hanson
  - Associate Editor, Child Maltreatment

Agenda

1. Introductions and welcome (Vince)
2. Overview of Child Maltreatment – APSAC’s flagship publication (Vince)
3. Publishing your work in Child Maltreatment (Dan)
   a) Deciding on a journal
   b) What to write / What not to write
4. Nuts and bolts for publishing in CM (Bri)
5. Reviewing and Editing for CM (Rochelle)
6. DISCUSSION

Presenter Disclosures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant/ Speakers’ bureaus</th>
<th>Dr. Palusci receives compensation from academic journals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research funding</td>
<td>&quot;No Disclosures.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock ownership/Corporate boards-employment</td>
<td>&quot;No Disclosures.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-label uses</td>
<td>&quot;No Disclosures.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About CM

- Established in 2000, Mark Chaffin was original editor
- CM started and managed by APSAC
  - EB members are expected to join APSAC
  - Added Associate Editors and student editors
- CM Primarily publishes original empirical work, quantitative or systematic reviews, position papers
  - Increased page number in 2019
  - Added organizational announcements and *In Memoriam*
How to Write, Review and Edit for Child Maltreatment, APSAC Colloquium, July 15, 2021

Diversity & Inclusion

- Race and ethnicity should be acknowledged as a social construct, rather than as genetic or biological categories.
- Scientific communities and the platforms used to disseminate research and practice findings (i.e., academic journals and newsletters) have an ethical obligation to fundamentally rethink the research process to include and promote a diverse group of scholars and scholarly work.
- Examples:
  - Questions being asked
  - Scholarly methods (e.g., quantitative analyses)
  - Interpretation of findings
  - Pipelines to bring scholars of color into the field
- Our standards for reviewing scientific articles
- Diversity of our reviewer pools and editorial boards

CM’s Recent Special Issues

- Trauma-informed care (Hanson & Lang, 2016)
- New technology (Baggett & Self-Brown, 2017)
- Neurobiological implications of maltreatment (Gonzalez & Oshri, 2019)
- Intimate partner violence and child maltreatment (Grasso, Stover & Whitaker, anticipated 2021)

Child Maltreatment

Recent “Articles of the Year”
Determined by vote of the Editorial Board
- Evidence-based service planning guidelines for child welfare (Berliner, Fitzgerald, et al., 2015)
- Developmental outcomes in foster care children (Goemans et al., 2016)
- Prevention using the Nurse Family Partnership (Eckenrode et al., 2017)
- AF-CBT in high risk populations (Koko et al., 2018)
- Trauma informed care in a state child welfare system (Jankowski et al., 2019)

Recent Special Issues

- Trauma-informed care (Hanson & Lang, 2016)
- New technology (Baggett & Self-Brown, 2017)
- Neurobiological implications of maltreatment (Gonzalez & Oshri, 2019)
- Intimate partner violence and child maltreatment (Grasso, Stover & Whitaker, anticipated 2021)

Child Maltreatment

Indexing /Abstracting

- Academic Search - Premier
- Academic Search Elite
- Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts (ASSIA)
- Behavioral Analysis Digest
- Biological Sciences Abstracts
- CINAHL
- Child Abuse and Neglect CD-ROM
- Child Development Abstracts & Bibliography
- Clarivate Analytics: Current Contents - Physical, Chemical & Earth Sciences
- Corporate ResourceNET - Ebsco
- Criminal Justice Abstracts
- Current Citations Express
- EBSCO: Business Source - Main Edition
- EBSCO: Family Studies Abstracts
- EBSCO: Health Source - Nursing/Academic Edition
- EBSCO: Violence & Abuse Abstracts
- Exceptional Child Education Resources
- FRANCIS Database
- Pollution Abstracts
- Prevention Evaluation Research Registry for Youth (PERRY)
- ProQuest: Applied Social Science Index & Abstracts (ASSIA)
- ProQuest: CSA Sociological Abstracts
- Professional Development Collection - Ebsco
- PsycINFO
- PsycLIT
- Psychological Abstracts
- Risk Abstracts
- Safety Science & Risk Abstracts
- SafetyLit
- Scopus
- Social Care Online
- Social SciSearch
- Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science)
- Social Services Abstracts
- Studies on Women Abstracts
- TOPICsearch - Ebsco
- The PILOTS Database
- Vocational Search
- Family & Society Studies Worldwide (NISC)
- Family Index Database
- Family Violence & Sexual Assault Bulletin
- Guide to Social Science & Religion in Periodical Literature
- Health & Safety Sciences Abstracts
- Health Source Plus
- IBR (International Bibliography of Book Reviews of Scholarly Literature on the Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Index Medicus
- Index to Periodical Articles Related to Law
- International Bibliography of Periodical Literature on the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBZ)
- Kindex
- MAS FullTEXT
- MEDLINE / Pubmed
- MasterFILE - Ebsco
- Military Library FullTEXT
- NCJRS Abstracts Database
- NISC
- PASCAL database
- POLLUTION Abstracts
- Prevention Evaluation Research Registry for Youth (PERRY)
- ProQuest: Applied Social Science Index & Abstracts (ASSIA)
- ProQuest: CSA Sociological Abstracts
- Professional Development Collection - Ebsco
- PsycINFO
- PsycLIT
- Psychological Abstracts
- Risk Abstracts
- Safety Science & Risk Abstracts
- SafetyLit
- Scopus
- Social Care Online
- Social SciSearch
- Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science)
- Social Services Abstracts
- Studies on Women Abstracts
- TOPICsearch - Ebsco
- The PILOTS Database
- Vocational Search
- Family & Society Studies Worldwide (NISC)
- Family Index Database
- Family Violence & Sexual Assault Bulletin
- Guide to Social Science & Religion in Periodical Literature
- Health & Safety Sciences Abstracts
- Health Source Plus
- IBR (International Bibliography of Book Reviews of Scholarly Literature on the Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Index Medicus
- Index to Periodical Articles Related to Law
- International Bibliography of Periodical Literature on the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBZ)
- Kindex
- MAS FullTEXT
- MEDLINE / Pubmed
- MasterFILE - Ebsco
- Military Library FullTEXT
- NCJRS Abstracts Database
- NISC
- PASCAL database
- POLLUTION Abstracts
- Prevention Evaluation Research Registry for Youth (PERRY)
- ProQuest: Applied Social Science Index & Abstracts (ASSIA)
- ProQuest: CSA Sociological Abstracts
- Professional Development Collection - Ebsco
- PsycINFO
- PsycLIT
- Psychological Abstracts
- Risk Abstracts
- Safety Science & Risk Abstracts
- SafetyLit
- Scopus
- Social Care Online
- Social SciSearch
- Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science)
- Social Services Abstracts
- Studies on Women Abstracts
- TOPICsearch - Ebsco
- The PILOTS Database
- Vocational Search

Diversity & Inclusion

- Race and ethnicity should be acknowledged as a social construct, rather than as genetic or biological categories.
- Scientific communities and the platforms used to disseminate research and practice findings (i.e., academic journals and newsletters) have an ethical obligation to fundamentally rethink the research process to include and promote a diverse group of scholars and scholarly work.
- Examples:
  - Questions being asked
  - Scholarly methods (e.g., quantitative analyses)
  - Interpretation of findings
  - Pipelines to bring scholars of color into the field
- Our standards for reviewing scientific articles
- Diversity of our reviewer pools and editorial boards
Diversity & Inclusion (cont’d)

- The use of racial and/or ethnic categories in models and analyses, and the selection of comparison groups should be explicitly justified and addressed.
- Research questions and interpretation of results should consider minority group members’ successes, the effects of racism (interpersonal, institution, or internalized), and histories of exclusion, mistreatment, and exploitation.
- APSAC is preparing statements addressing these issues across publications.

Publishing your work in CM

Dan Whitaker

Why publish in a journal?

- To enhance the visibility and reach of your work
- To improve your work via the rigorous peer review process
- To establish your ownership and verify the quality of your work
- To have a voice
  - engaging with key debates
  - exploring new ideas and methods
  - challenging existing ideas

Publishing child maltreatment research: Many choices

- Many choices in journals that publish articles on child maltreatment
- Discipline specific journals
  - Psychology (JCCP, Developmental Psychology)
  - Medicine (Pediatrics, JAMA, Lancet)
  - Public Health (AJPH, AJPM, Preventive Medicine)
  - Social Work (CYSR, J of Research on Social Work, Social Work Research)
- Law/Policy journals (Health Policy)
- Interdisciplinary journals,
  - Violence specific journal (JUV, V&V, JFV, Psych of Violence)
  - Child maltreatment specific journal (CM, CAN, Child Abuse Review, J of Child Sexual Abuse)
  - Population-focused journals (J of Adolescent Health, J of Child and Family Studies, J of Women’s Health)
  - Prevention/Intervention journals (Prevention Science, Implementation Science)

Deciding where to publish child maltreatment research

- Disciplinary journals may lean toward for relevance to their field
- Psychology journal can tend to be theoretical; clinical psych journals tend to want relevance to a clinical conditions
- PH/Medical journals tend to favor impact: larger samples, “harder” outcomes
- Social work journals tend to be more practice oriented
- Framing your findings to the journal’s focus can be very important
- This may not be explicit, but more a function of the Editor and reviewers

Choosing a journal for publishing your work

- Consider...
  - Focus of your article
  - Discipline
  - Theoretical vs. applied
  - Journal impact factor
  - Higher = better - more people are reading and citing the work
  - Higher = typically more competition
  - Who is the audience for the journal?
  - Regular vs. Open access
    - Open access journals typically run a fee (~ $1000-$3000)
    - Quality open access journals typically run a fee (~ $1000-$3000)
  - Review vs. editorial
    - Attractive for “high-quality peer review within days...”
  - Severity journals
    - Open access with low fees
  - Heavy publication of years
  - Promise “high-quality peer review within days...”
  - Such journals have low credibility
Other thoughts about choosing journal
- Read journal Aims/Scope
- Read author instructions
- Where are the papers you are citing being published?
- Write the Editor; send an abstract or even a paper draft
- Use Elsevier journal finder https://journalfinder.elsevier.com/
- Ask colleagues

How do I know if CM is the right choice?
Ask these questions....
- Is your article primarily about child maltreatment?
  - Causes, consequences, interventions, practices, policies,
- Is your article empirical? Do you have data?
- Is there some theoretical basis to your work, or very strong external validity?
  - CM is interested in both kinds of papers
  - Is your work rigorous?
  - Probably the most difficult question
  - Ultimately, this the judgment of the Editor and reviewers

What kinds of papers does CM publish?
- Empirical articles
  - Empirical means they have original data
  - Data can be quantitative or qualitative
- Review papers
  - Strong preference for quantitative reviews
  - Most often invited
- Theoretical pieces are occasionally published (like, very occasionally)
- Commentaries are occasionally published (check with Editor for interest)

Preparing to submit
- Read author instructions
- Pay attention to page length and formatting (and yes, we have more to say than fits into 32 pages)
- Use APA style
- Pay attention to your presentation
  - Too much sloppiness will cast doubt on the credibility of the paper
  - Well-presented data tables help the reader understand what you are presenting
  - “Problems” with the data are often problems in communicating about the data, not the actual data
- Have someone else read your paper

Your paper is received: What does the Editor look for?
- Almost half of papers are rejected by the Editor prior to review
- What is the editor looking for?
- Relevance: Is the paper mostly about child maltreatment?
- Is an important question being addressed?
  - Can be theoretically or practically important
- Are the methods rigorous?
- Will the paper be cited?

You made it to review: What do reviewers look for?
- Introduction
  - Is there a clear research question? Is it justified based on the literature?
- Method — are they rigorous
  - Longitudinal data collection
  - Comparison groups for evaluation studies (or randomization)
  - Appropriate measurement of variables
  - Appropriate sample (generally, not college students)
  - Results: Do the analyses answer the research questions?
  - Are analyses appropriate
- Discussion
  - Do the conclusions match the results?
  - Limitations
After you submit...

- Be patient – time to first decision is ~ 60 days
- Editorial rejection without sending out for review takes < week.
- Your paper can be accepted, rejected, a revision can be requested (R&R)
- Almost no papers are accepted on the first submission.
- If you get rejected, don't despair – it happens to everyone.
- Method weaknesses are the primary reason for rejection.
- Look at the reviews; try to address major points before submitting elsewhere.
- Consider moving down a tier in quality when you resubmit to another journal.

Responding to reviews...

- If you get an R&R, the Editors consider your paper potentially publishable.
- Address comments with the mindset that the Editors and Reviewers are trying to improve your paper.
- It is rare that the reviewer is completely right, and the author completely wrong, and vice versa.
- When a reviewer is wrong about something, it may be because of how you communicated about the issue.
- CM requires you to address all comments in a point-by-point response.
- Say “Yes” to as much as possible; point out in your paper where you made changes.
- If you disagree with a reviewer, be respectful and say why; you may need to bolster your rationale in the paper.
- If you are unsure how to address something, OK to ask Editor.
- Be prepared for a 2nd R&R.

Nuts and Bolts about Child Maltreatment

Bri Stormer

Child Maltreatment

Aims and Scope

- “[F]oster professional excellence in the field of child abuse and neglect by reporting current and at-issue scientific information and technical innovations.”
- “[I]mmediately useful to practitioners and researchers from mental health, child protection, law, law enforcement, medicine, nursing, and allied disciplines.”
- “[E]mphasizes perspectives with a rigorous scientific base that are relevant to policy, practice, and research.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- APSAC formed the Commission for Racial Justice in Child Maltreatment in 2020 and released a commitment to eliminate systemic racism and implicit bias in the Child Maltreatment Field.
- Separate commentaries are being published for APSAC Publications with individual commitments and timelines to promote equity and justice in child maltreatment scholarship and publishing.
- CM Commentary anticipated publication: Fall/Winter 2021
HRF7  Same as last slide - highlight the important points
Hanson, Rochelle F, 6/4/2021
Peer Review

- Manuscripts have been subjected to the peer review process prior to publication for over 300 years.
- Currently, the peer review process is used by almost all scientific journals.
- Scholarly publication is the means by which new work is communicated, and peer review is an important part of this process.
- Peer review is a vital part of the quality control mechanism that is used to determine what is published, and what is not.
- Peer reviewers have differing roles and expertise: specific content, methodology, statistics, broad picture, etc.
- May be open, single or double blinded.

Peer Review & Publication Process

Goals of Peer Review

#1: To help select quality articles for publication based upon:

- Scientific merit, validity and strong methodology:
  - Has the research that is being reported been carried out well with no flaws in the design or methodology?
  - Correct reporting of the work, with appropriate acknowledgements
  - Results have been interpreted correctly, and all possible interpretations considered.
  - Results are not too preliminary or speculative, but at the same time promote sharing of innovative new research and theories.
  - Relevance to the specific clinical practice – select work that will be the greatest interest to the readership
  - The interest of the topic to the journal’s readers and clarity of the article itself

#2: To improve the manuscript whenever possible.

- Generally, improve the quality and readability of a publication (NOT GRAMMAR)

#3: To check against malfeasance within the scientific and clinical community.

#4: Provide editors with evidence to make judgments as to whether articles meet the selection criteria for their particular publications.
Review process

- Papers submitted
  - Full length article, brief, review, something else
- Pre-reject vs. review
- Action Editor assigned
  - Whitaker, Valentino, Hanson, Maguire-Jack
- Assign reviewers
  - Look for content match
  - Look for methods/stats expertise
  - Finding 3 reviewers can be surprisingly tough
  - Reviewers have 30 days by the system
  - System auto-nags
  - Editor manually nags when he thinks about it!
- Action Editor reads letters and writes decision letters

Conducting your review

- You will be assigned when there is a content match
- Papers are not going to match your content exactly
  - Sometimes it's hard to tell for the editor
- Please try to say Yes
  - If you feel it's not in your content area, OK to say no
- OK to say yes, if you can't meet the 30-day turnaround
  - Just let Bri know, and she can adjust the due date
- If you can't get to it in 45 days, you should probably say no
- Note. Time to initial decision for reviewed papers was <60 days in 2021

Your review

- What to look for...
  - Consult the manual – has many good points
- Editorial decisions live and die by two things...
  - Is the focus appropriate for CM?
    - Mostly these will be yes, but not always
- Does the paper contribute anything new scientifically?
  - Is there a rationale for what they are doing?
  - Are the methods adequate?
  - Are they analyses appropriate to answer the research question?
  - Are the conclusions justified based on the data?

Organizing your narrative

- Confidential comments to editor – these are very helpful
  - In between two decisions
    - Didn’t understand something
    - Out of area of expertise
- Write review to the Editor, not to the author
- Most reviewers organize comments in 1 of 2 ways
  - Two sections: major issues, minor issues
  - List comments in order of paper: Intro, Method, Results, Discussion
- Try to communicate what you see as the most major issues
  - Helps associate editors/editor to know what you see as the ‘make or break’ issues
- Try to be polite and constructive
- Don’t tip your hand to the Author on your recommendation

Ratings and recommendations

Rate the paper (1-5)
- Impact/contribution
- Rationale for question
- Methodology
- Quality of data and inferences drawn
- Clinical/policy implications
- Acknowledge limitations

Make your recommendation
- Accept as is
- Minor revisions
- R&R, Encouraging
- R&R, Guarded
- Reject, possible submit as new paper
- Reject

Don’t be afraid to choose “Reject”!
- Reviews are rarely entirely consistent

Ethical Publication: What we look for

Fraud
- making up data, or changing data, inaccurate attribution to authors
Duplicate submission
- submitting the same article to more than one journal at the same time
- submitting two highly related papers without disclosure
Duplicate publication
- publishing the same paper twice
Plagiarism
- submitting a whole (or parts of a) published work as your own
Self-plagiarism
- republishing your own work without proper citation
Inadequate citing
- not citing appropriate previous works on the same subject
- not acknowledging another researcher’s contribution
Basic principles to which peer reviewers should adhere (COPE): Tips for Peer Reviewers

- Only agree to review manuscripts for which they have the subject expertise required to carry out a proper assessment and which they can assess in a timely manner.
- Respect the confidentiality of peer review and not reveal any details of a manuscript or its review, during or after the peer-review process, beyond those that are released by the journal.
- Not use information obtained during the peer-review process for their own or any other person’s or organization’s advantage, or to disadvantage or discredit others.
- Declare all potential conflicting interests, seeking advice from the journal if they are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest.
- Not allow their reviews to be influenced by the origins of a manuscript, by the nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender or other characteristics of the authors, or by commercial considerations.

Basic principles to which peer reviewers should adhere (COPE): Tips for Peer Reviewers, cont’d

- Be objective and constructive in their reviews, refraining from being hostile or inflammatory and from making libelous or derogatory personal comments.
- Acknowledge that peer review is largely a reciprocal endeavor and undertake to carry out their fair share of reviewing and in a timely manner.
- Provide journals with personal and professional information that is accurate and a true representation of their expertise.
- Recognize that impersonation of another individual during the review process is considered serious misconduct.

References


Discussion

Vincent J. Palusci, MD, MS  vincent.palusci@nymulangone.org
Dan Whitaker, PhD dwhitaker@gsu.edu
Rochelle Hanson, PhD Hansonrf@musc.edu
Bri Stormer, MSW bstormer@apsac.org

General Inquiries  childmaltreatment@apsac.org
BS8  The updated one should be published soon.
Bri Stormer, 6/8/2021