

# Getting your medical research published

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Past News Editor

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Working toward getting your research published? Physician publishing experts—including two editors in chief—offer practical advice, from conceptualizing your research to writing your paper, targeting the best publications and overcoming rejection.

## Start at the very beginning

Your success in getting published shouldn't start with a complete paper. It should start right when you conceptualize your research.

Edward Livingston, MD, deputy editor of clinical content for the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, said it all begins with asking the right questions. "Re-examine what's in front of you," Dr. Livingston told physicians in training at a recent AMA meeting. "It's not necessary to find something new [to research]. ... You can do more to help patient care if you start thinking in smaller terms."

Dr. Livingston also said residents shouldn't be deterred by a lack of funding. "Some major science advances were accomplished with minimal funding," he said.

Read additional advice about getting your research published.

## Writing the paper is just as important as conducting the research

“You need to be thinking about the paper from the get-go,” said Susan Bates, MD, senior clinical investigator and head of the Molecular Therapeutics Section in the Developmental Therapeutics Branch and Coronary Vector of Columbia University’s BA Cancer Initiative.

“It’s not cheap science to think about the paper,” Dr. Bates told residents at a recent AMA meeting. “It’s a way of executing what you do .... You need to have an idea about the point of your paper and the story you’re going to tell.”

Read more about Dr. Bates’ key tips for researching and writing your paper for publication.

Howard Bauchner, MD, *JAMA* editor in chief, offers five tips for residents who are presenting their research in a paper for publication.

“Only ... a select number of people will read your whole paper,” Dr. Bauchner said. “I can’t emphasize enough how important the abstract is.”

## Target your submissions, and don’t be deterred by rejection

Knowing where to submit your research is half the battle of breaking into medical publishing. When you’re considering where to send your work, take time to research publication guidelines and special opportunities that fit your level of training.

View this list of peer-reviewed publications to help you get started on the road to successful publication.

Dr. Bates says both targeting publications that fit the scope of your research and tailoring your submissions to the publications are essential. One commonly overlooked step is following the journal’s specific author instructions. “Sometimes you’ll prepare a paper, and it’ll be just perfect, but it’ll [have] three times too many figures and twice as many words” as the required author guidelines, she said.

Read additional common pitfalls Dr. Bates says residents should avoid.

And if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again. Gail M. Sullivan, MD, editor in chief for the *Journal of Graduate Medical Education* suggests following six steps to overcome rejection. She covers issues from what to do with the rejection letter to evaluating why your paper was turned down to the decision of whether and where to resubmit your paper.