

Publishing at a “Nature” journal

An overview



At Nature journals

- Professional editors
- PhDs but almost always postdocs
- Wide comfort zone and editorial expertise
- Understanding of fast-moving areas of research, leaders in the field

What do *Nature* editors look for?

Mainly:

- **Breadth of interest:** Novel conclusions of interest and/or direct relevance to scientists in other fields
- **A striking conceptual advance:** Novel conclusions that change our understanding of the field

These criteria are relaxed for certain types of papers

- Significant resource value (*e.g.* CRISPR/Cas9 screen, genomes, single-cell analysis etc)
- Significant technical breakthrough (*e.g.* new structural biology or single-molecule technique)
- Significant public interest (*e.g.* COVID biology, novel therapeutics, phase I clinical trials)

Resource value

nature
immunology

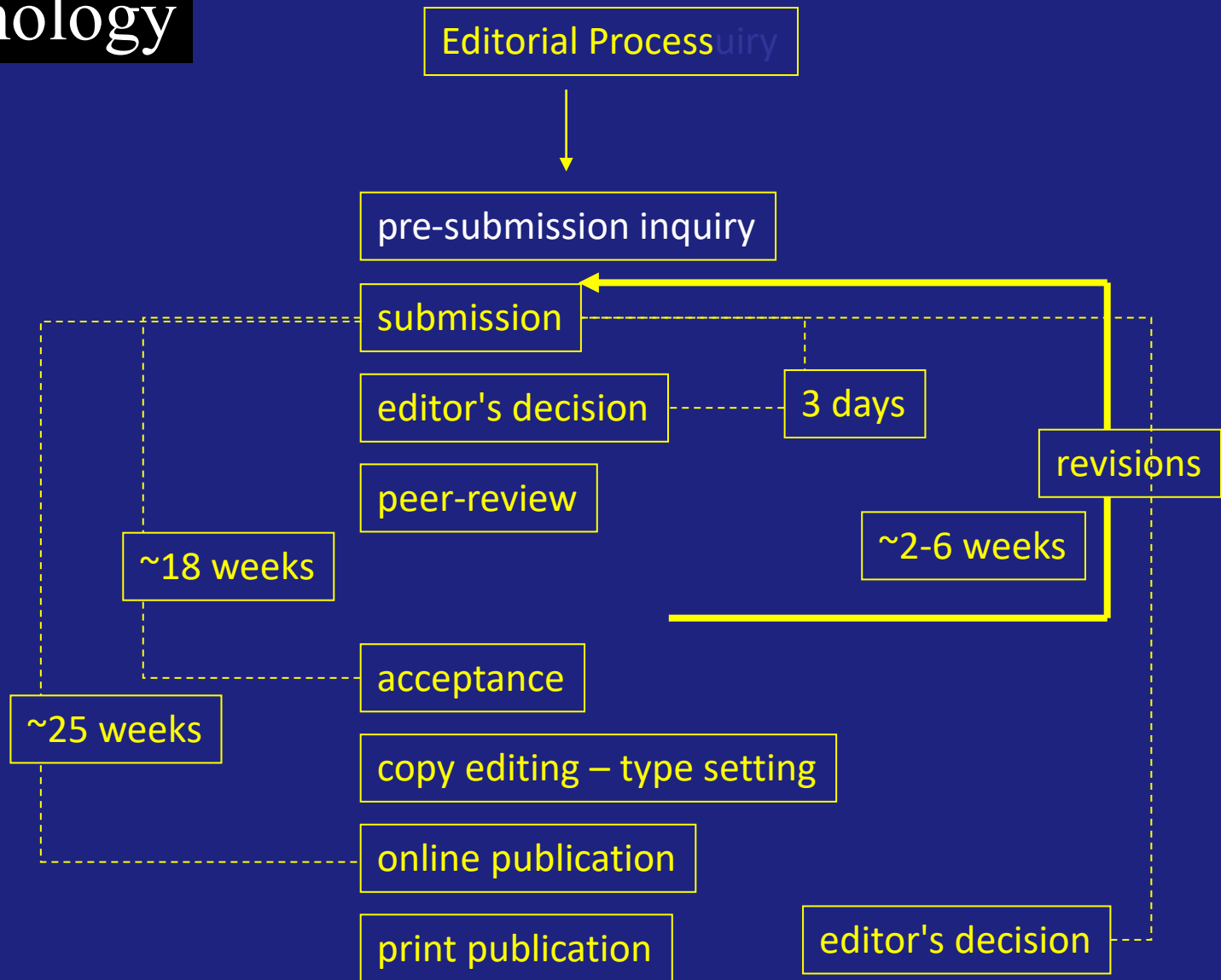
RESOURCE

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41590-020-0762-x>



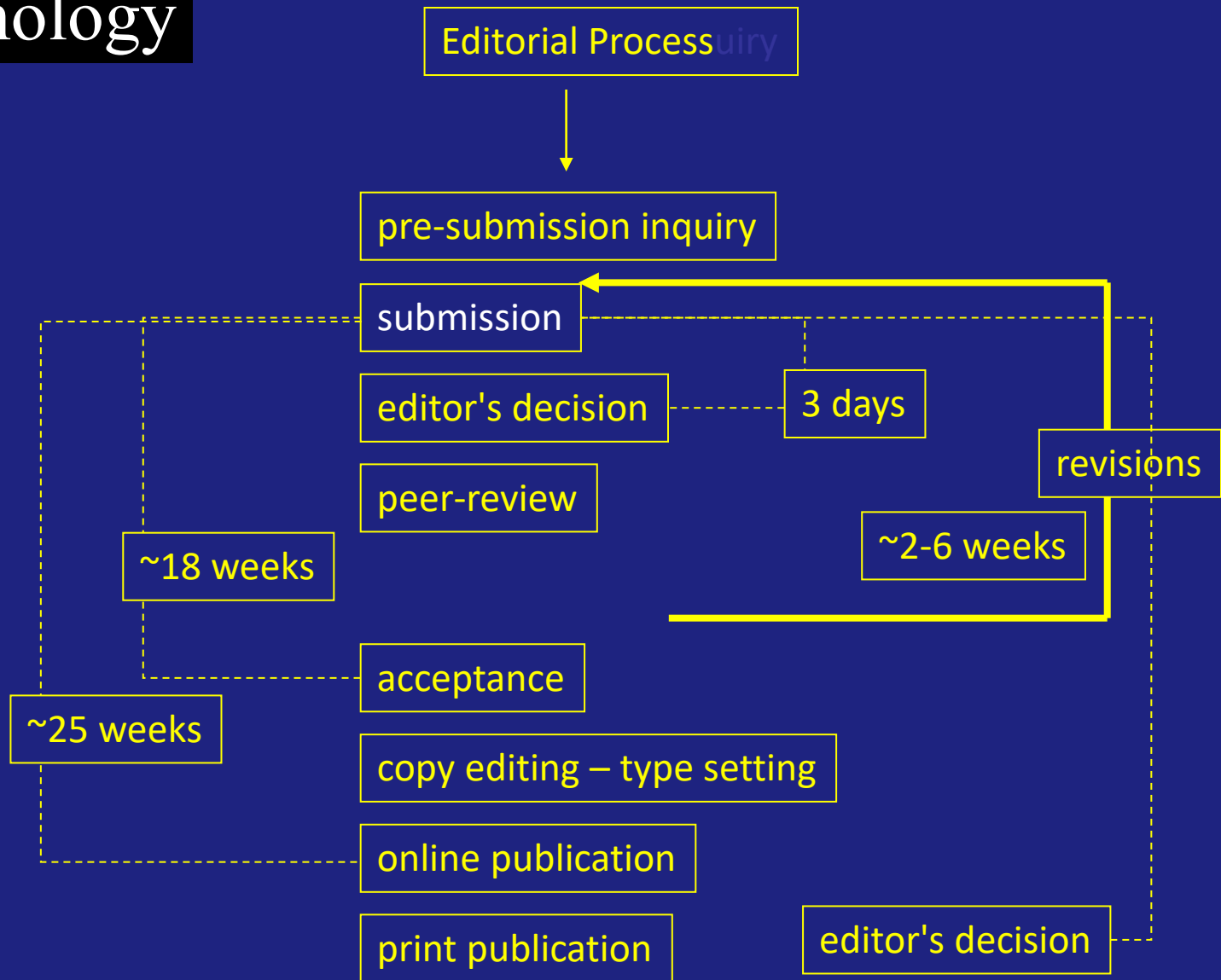
Single-cell landscape of immunological responses in patients with COVID-19

Severe COVID-19 is characterized—among other things—by a hyperinflammatory state. Wang and colleagues describe the single-cell transcriptional landscape of moderate, severe and convalescent cases of patients with COVID-19.



Pre-submission inquiries at Nature journals

- Only for papers that have not yet been written in full
- Submit an abstract with covering paragraph; in a few days, the editor will indicate whether they are interested
- About one-third of the time, we ask for the whole paper



Submitting your paper

- Check the journal's formatting guidelines and instructions to authors again. Choose best manuscript type.
- No manuscript should be submitted simultaneously to more than one journal
- Cover letters

The Cover Letter

Dear Editor,

We would like to submit our manuscript entitled [title] as a [format] in [journal name].

[To our knowledge, this is the first report showing... This is important because...]

We believe our findings would appeal to the readership of [journal name]...

Possible referees we would suggest...

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience...

The basics:

- Title of the paper
- Format (e.g. Article/Letter)

Why should we care?

- Very brief context of direct relevance to your findings
- Key finding (related to context)
- Why is it important?
- Interest to *that journal's* readers

Other requirements:

- Referees for in/exclusion

Submission and reproducibility

- Efforts to reproduce the findings of studies frequently fail
- Often, a lack of attention to detail in methods selection or description is to blame
- Increasing requirement to demonstrate rigorous experimental design and analysis at submission
- So.....

Corresponding Author Name: _____

Manuscript Number: _____

Reporting Checklist For Life Sciences Articles

This checklist is used to ensure good reporting standards and to improve the reproducibility of published results. For more information, please read [Reporting Life Sciences Research](#).

► Figure legends

☐ Check here to confirm that the following information is available in all relevant figure legends (or Methods section if too long):

- the **exact sample size (n)** for each experimental group/condition, given as a number, not a range;
- a **description of the sample collection** allowing the reader to understand whether the samples represent **technical or biological replicates** (including how many animals, litters, culture, etc.);
- a **statement of how many times the experiment shown was replicated in the laboratory**;
- **definitions of statistical methods and measures:** (For small sample sizes (n<5) descriptive statistics are not appropriate, instead plot individual data points)
 - very common tests, such as t-test, simple χ^2 tests, Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney tests, can be unambiguously identified by name only, but more complex techniques should be described in the methods section;
 - are tests one-sided or two-sided?
 - are there adjustments for multiple comparisons?
 - **statistical test results**, e.g., **P values**;
 - definition of '**center values**' as **median or mean**;
 - definition of **error bars** as **s.d. or s.e.m. or c.i.**

Please ensure that the answers to the following questions are reported **in the manuscript itself**. We encourage you to include a specific subsection in the Methods section for statistics, reagents and animal models. Below, provide the page number or section and paragraph number.

► Statistics and general methods**Reported in section/paragraph or page #:**

1. How was the sample size chosen to ensure adequate power to detect a pre-specified effect size? (Give section/paragraph or page #)

For animal studies, include a statement about sample size estimate even if no statistical methods were used.

2. Describe inclusion/exclusion criteria if samples or animals were excluded from the analysis. Were the criteria pre-established? (Give section/paragraph or page #)

3. If a method of randomization was used to determine how samples/animals were allocated to experimental groups and processed, describe it. (Give section/paragraph or page #)

For animal studies, include a statement about randomization even if no randomization was used.

4. If the investigator was blinded to the group allocation during the experiment and/or when assessing the outcome, state the extent of blinding. (Give section/paragraph or page #)

For animal studies, include a statement about blinding even if no blinding was done.

5. For every figure, are statistical tests justified as appropriate?

Do the data meet the assumptions of the tests (e.g., normal distribution)?

Is there an estimate of variation within each group of data?

Is the variance similar between the groups that are being statistically compared? (Give section/paragraph or page #)

April 2015

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Reporting checklist for life sciences : A tool for authors and reviewers

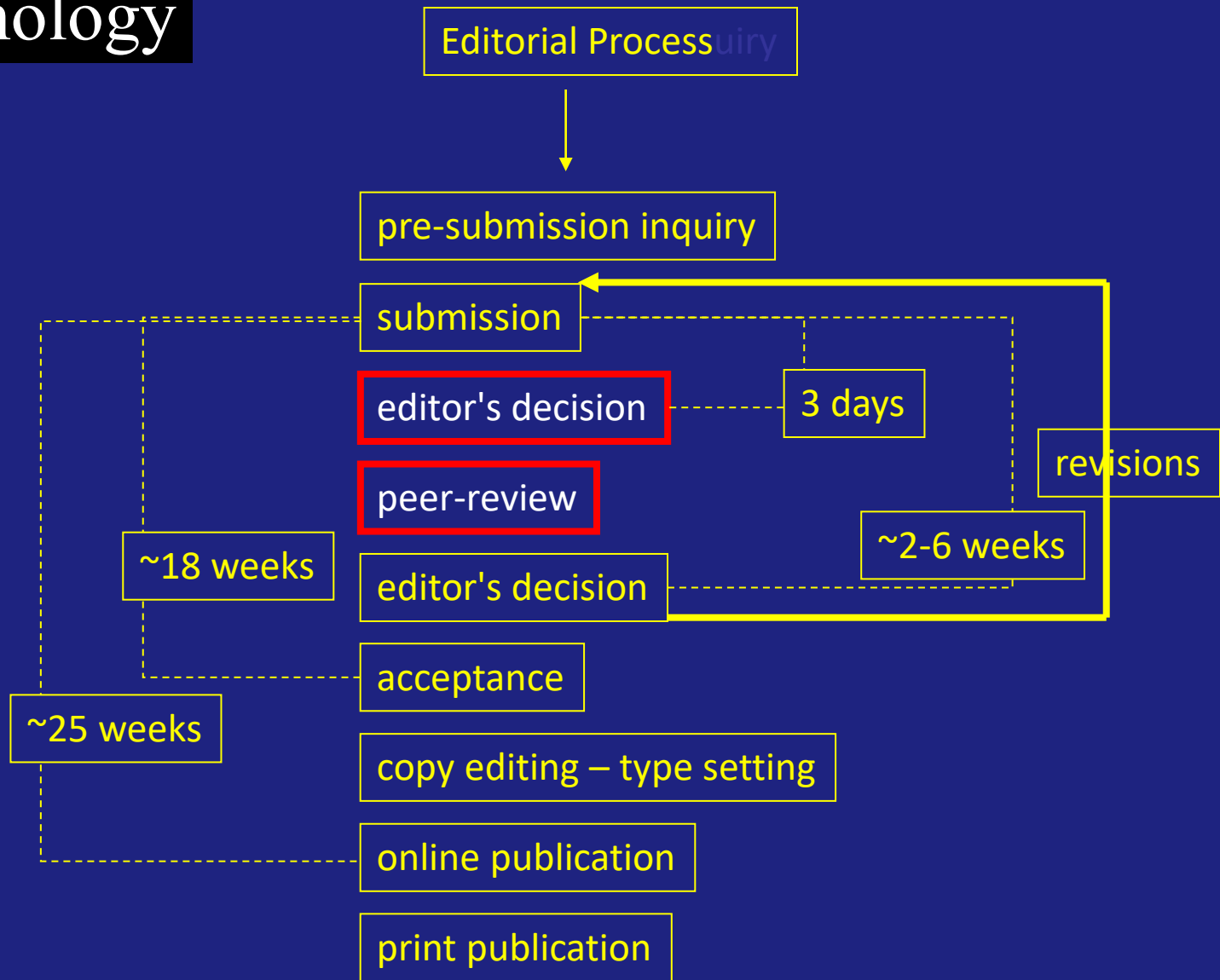
1. Checklist of reporting standards (since May2013), including statements of ethical compliance.
2. Meaningful methods: Eliminated length limits for methods section
3. Increased scrutiny of statistics
4. Re-emphasized data sharing
 - Use of repositories- GEO, Array Express
 - List of public data repositories now maintained by *Scientific Data*
 - source data – aka ‘data behind graphs’

Flow cytometry data

- The axis labels state the marker and fluorochrome used (e.g. CD4-FITC)
- The axis scales are clearly visible
- All plots are contour/pseudocolor plots (Dot plots can be used to show rare events)
- Describe the sample preparation/ identify the instrument used for data collection
- Describe the gating strategy used and show the data

Other items

- Supply any related in press/submitted manuscripts
- Availability and peer review of computer code/algorithm
- primary datasets (generated during the study) and referenced datasets (datasets analyzed in the study) must be provided for peer review
- Competing interests/author contribution statement
- Submission to a pre-print server is encouraged

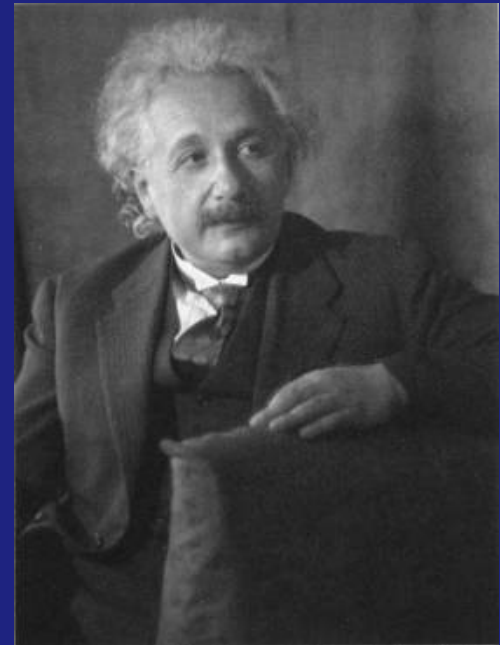


Peer review is a modern tool

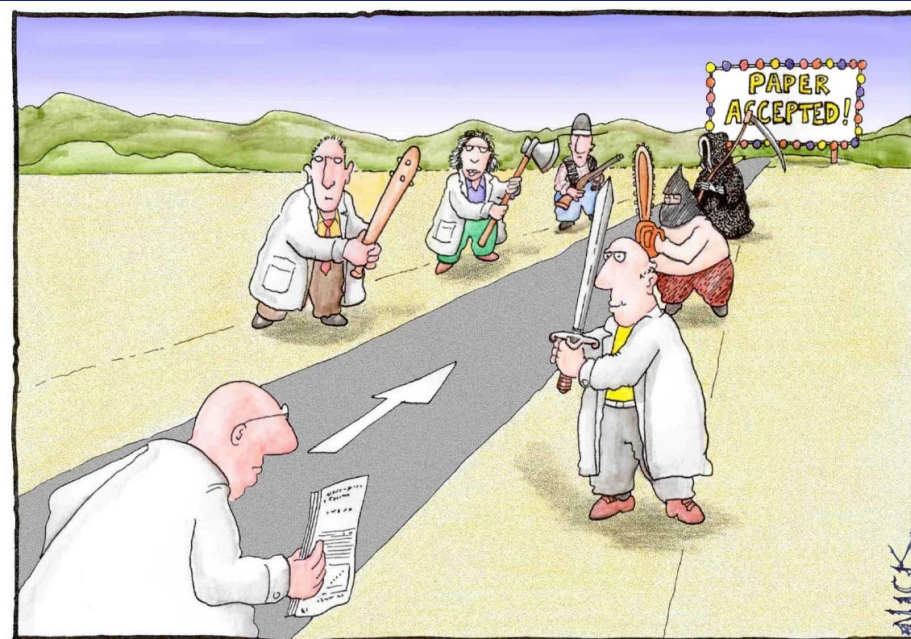
Dear Sir,

We (Mr. Rosen and I) had sent you our manuscript for publication and had not authorized you to show it to specialists before it is printed. I see no reason to address the — in any case erroneous — comments of your anonymous expert. On the basis of this incident I prefer to publish the paper elsewhere.

Respectfully,
Albert Einstein



Peer review is a positive process



Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as "quite an improvement."

Cartoon by Nick D Kim, scienceandink.com. Used by permission.

Experts give advice on how to **improve** your study and your manuscript

Ensures only **relevant** studies are published

Peer review helps to **advance** the field

But not an exact science.....

Infamous Misses

- Kreb's cycle – rejected without review
- Beta decay (Fermi, Nobel prize-winning advance) – rejected without review

‘Ideal’ peer reviewers’ report is...

- Detailed technical assessment of the entire paper
- Assessment of the significance of the work and its implications
- Minimal bias, no conflict of interest
- Timely, fair-minded, constructive

How are referees chosen?

- Technical expertise
- Broad knowledge of the field
- Efficient
- Fair-minded

Choose type of peer review

1. Regular
2. Double-blind
3. Transparent

Double Blind Peer Review

A 1998 study by a group from Case Western University performed a randomized controlled study of 118 manuscripts submitted to several medical journals where reviewers were “blinded” to author identity.

JAMA. 1998 Jul 15;280(3):240-2.

**Does masking author identity improve peer review quality?
A randomized controlled trial. PEER Investigators.**

Justice AC, Cho MK, Winker MA, Berlin JA, Rennie D.

Division of General Internal Medicine, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and University Hospitals of Cleveland and Case Western Reserve University, Ohio 44106, USA.
acj@po.cwru.edu

Conclusion: little benefit

Transparent Peer Review

- Nature Research journals now publish 'Peer review information' containing all anonymous referee reports, as well as all correspondence between the authors and the editorial office

Peer Review Information

Journal: Nature Immunology

Manuscript Title: Intratumoral follicular regulatory T cells curtail anti-PD-1 treatment efficacy

Corresponding author name(s): Pandurangan Vijayanand

Reviewer Comments & Decisions:

Decision Letter, initial version:

Subject: Decision on Nature Immunology submission NI-A30338

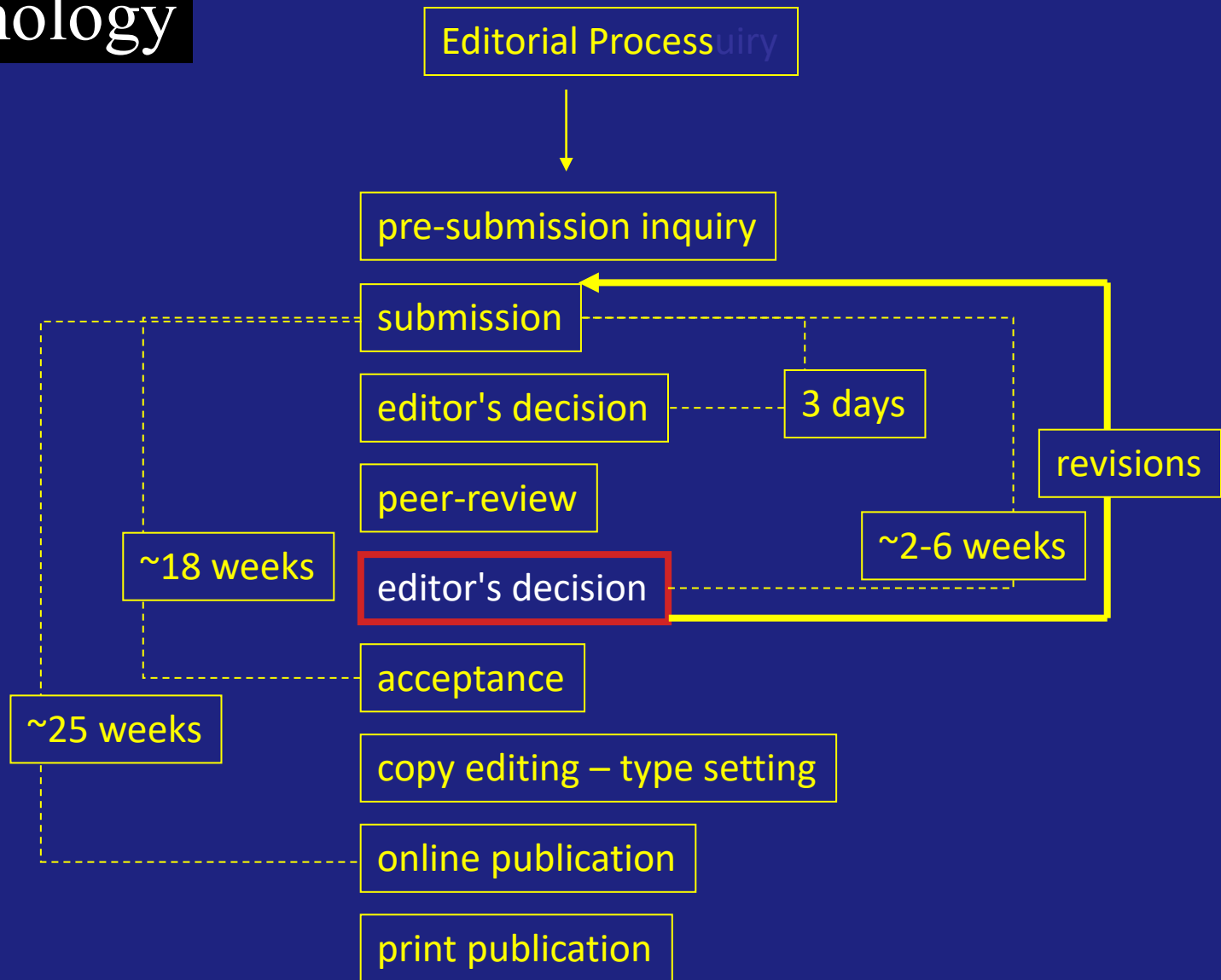
Message: 2nd Sep 2020

Dear Vijay,

Thank you for providing a point-by-point response to the referees comments on your manuscript entitled "T_{FR} cells inhibit anti-tumor immunity and are responsive to immune checkpoint blockade". As noted previously, while they find your work of considerable potential interest, they have raised quite substantial concerns that must be addressed. In light of these comments, we cannot accept the current manuscript for publication, but would be very interested in considering a revised version along the outline that you & your colleagues have provided.

Specifically, please include the following new experiments (points refer to your response):

- (1) scRNA-seq of the tumor-infiltrating Tfr cells
 - (6) assay for Ifng and Gzmb expression in Treg/Tfr suppression assays upon co-culture with CD8 Teff cells.
 - (7/13) delete Tfr cells and look at anti-tumor response +/- anti-PD-1 therapy.
 - (10) delete Tfr cells and look at effects on tumor-draining LNs
 - (12) perform immunohistochemistry using anti-CD20 on human tumor samples
- Other clarifications as mentioned in your response are fine.



Multiple rounds of peer review

- To be accepted after only one round of peer review at *Nature* is extremely rare
- A new round of peer review is needed if the previous round raised important technical comments
- Not all referees may be needed in the next round
- At NI we usually use 2-3 referees

Decisions after review

Accept

Revise (long/short)

Reject close door

Reasons for rejection

- Lack of mechanistic insight/ too descriptive
- Data do not support conclusions
- Too specialized, or lacking in broad interest
- New, but not a large enough step in field

If at first you don't succeed...

Relax, revise, and resubmit

And we can help!

The Transfer Desk



Has your manuscript ever been rejected because it was too interdisciplinary or too specialized, not sufficiently novel or because it didn't exactly match a journal's aims and scope? Manuscripts that are scientifically sound can be rejected for various reasons other than quality, which can be very frustrating. Our Transfer Desk can help!



<https://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors/journal-author/the-springer-transfer-desk>

Manuscript transfer system

- Every rejection email has a link at the bottom to our transfer system
- Activating the system is completely up to the authors
- Guided transfer
- Consultations (opt in/out at submission)

Appeals- what happens?

- Paper is seen again by handling editor
- While we take appeals very seriously, they are not given the highest priority, so it can take longer to get an answer

Appeal – what helps?

- New data
- Referee (or editor) made factual errors.
- Specific evidence of bias by referee

Appeals - what doesn't help

- “Referees are unfair”
- Guesses at referee identity followed by personal attacks
- Celebrity endorsements
- Cosmetic rewriting of the paper
- Statements about the authors’ reputation
- “You published an even worse paper”

Resubmitting

- Only resubmit when you can address all comments
- Do further work if requested (unless you have good reason not to). Editor will guide you
- Check that your responses won't be misread as arrogant or aggressive – the referees may be(come) acquaintances
- Include a summary of changes in the cover letter

After acceptance

- Choose open access (Plan S compliant) *or* subscription model
- Subediting, art and production departments will work on the manuscript
- News & Views, press releases: editorial decisions

Promote your article after publication

Don't wait for people to find it!

Promote on social media

- LinkedIn & Twitter
- Use **content sharing** at Springer
Nature - Send a link to your colleagues
and peers

Share this article

Anyone you share the following link with will be able to read this content:

[Get shareable link](#)

Provided by the Springer Nature SharedIt content-sharing initiative

Thank you!!

- Any questions??

Jamie D K Wilson, D.Phil

Chief Editor, *Nature Immunology*

E-mail: j.wilson@us.nature.com