

Writing Process for Manuscripts

This document describes the writing process, including roles, expectations, and procedures for writing papers related to studies conducted in the AAFP National Research Network (AAFP NRN). These processes are separate from the Publication Policy.

General Principles

- ❖ This writing process was developed to facilitate the timely dissemination of research findings in the academic press, to reduce stress, and to increase communication among the various people involved in AAFP NRN studies.
- ❖ The AAFP NRN expects to publish the results of every study conducted by our investigators or in our network. The Publication Policy indicates timelines for this to occur, with contingency plans for situations where the Principal Investigator (PI) is unable to fulfill the publishing expectation.
- ❖ Investigators for each study will either agree to follow the AAFP NRN publication policy, or will develop a mutually acceptable publication policy prior to the academic dissemination of information (including manuscripts or presentations) for all studies in which the AAFP NRN is a partner.

Key Roles in the Writing Process

Principal Investigator: The PI is responsible for ensuring that the primary results of the study are disseminated in the form of a scientific paper.

Production Manager: This person will manage the entire writing process. S/he is responsible for setting appropriate deadlines, maintaining progress, compiling sections written by others into a single draft, setting up a document template, and formatting the paper in accordance with the journal's style.

Primary Author: This person is responsible for the main writing task and is the corresponding author for the paper. For main effects papers this is typically the PI of the study. Authorship decisions are delineated in the Publication Policy of the AAFP NRN, or a modified publication policy specific to the study in question.

Core Writing Group: This group of 3-4 people is responsible for the content of the paper, including the main outcomes and messages reported there. They make decisions concerning the manuscript. If conflict arises, this group must reach consensus.

Steps in the Writing Process

1. The investigators must identify a Production Manager and the Core Writing Group. It is expected that the Core Writing group will be representative of the researchers and research organizations involved in the study.

Writing Process for Manuscripts

2. The Core Writing Group identifies the main outcome of the paper.
3. The Core Writing Group writes a 200-300 word abstract in the classic structured format.
4. The Core Writing Group routes this abstract to other appropriate individuals for comment.
5. The Core Writing Group revises the abstract and decides if the manuscript is worthy of publication. If the Core Writing Group does not include either the AAFP NRN Director or the AAFP NRN Research Director then one of these individuals must also review the abstract and agree that publication is appropriate if the AAFP NRN is to be referenced in the manuscript.
6. The core writing group identifies all members of the writing team:
 - a. Primary Author
 - b. Secondary Authors
 - c. Data Analyst(s)
 - d. PI of project
7. The Core Writing Group clarifies main effects of paper and reviews the soundness of the analytical plan with the Data Analyst.
8. The Production Manager works with Primary Author to identify a timeline for the project and divide up writing tasks. If an author misses a deadline for the same product twice in a row then the Production Manager has the authority to reassign this work product as well as adjust that person's authorship status.
9. The Core Writing Group determines which journal will be the initial target for the paper.
10. The Production Manager compiles versions of the paper into a single draft.
11. All manuscripts must receive final approval as outlined in the Publication Policy prior to submission for peer review.
12. The Production Manager or Primary Author submits the manuscript for publication.
13. The Production Manager is responsible for coordinating all replies to peer reviewers, though it is expected that the Primary Author will take the major responsibility in preparing these replies. Any secondary submission that requires re-analysis of data or re-interpretation of the primary findings of the paper

Writing Process for Manuscripts

requires approval of all authors as well as the AAFP senior scientist responsible for initial submission approval. Within 2 weeks of receipt of the comments, the AAFP NRN senior scientist responsible for submission approval will review peer review comments and determine if his or her review is necessary prior to re-submission.

14. All re-submissions are expected to be completed within 4 weeks of receipt of the peer review comments. The Production Manager will notify the AAFP NRN Director or designee of any deviations from this timeline. A re-negotiated time line will then be developed.