

JRH POLICY ON PRIOR DISSEMINATION

The Journal of Rural Health (JRH) accepts for consideration only submissions that are original contributions, have not been published or widely disseminated previously, and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere. The journal's policy recognizes the value of both the peer review process (in maintaining the credibility of published research) and it realizes there is less value in publishing papers that have already been disseminated to their target audiences.

Redundant publication occurs when multiple papers, without full cross reference in the text, share the same data or results. Self-plagiarism refers to the practice of an author using portions of his or her previous writings on the same topic in another of his or her publications without specifically citing the previous writing.

Previous publication of an abstract during the proceedings of meetings (in print or electronically) does not preclude subsequent submission for publication, but full disclosure should be made in the cover letter at the time of manuscript submission.

Dissemination of "working papers" to a limited audience will not ordinarily jeopardize publication, provided that such papers are released by the author rather than by a publisher, are not advertised to the public and are marked as drafts that are subject to future revision.

In general, when posting on the Internet serves similar functions as presentation at professional meetings (facilitating the development of papers and the improvement of the research and influencing future revisions), it would not be considered prior publication. Conversely, Internet and other electronic publications that function as a virtual version of a conventional publication, which may even be copyrighted by the posting organization, should be considered the same as print publication. Formal, published reports that have been previously posted on the Internet in their entirety, have been intended to reach a wide audience, and are publicized and available to any interested party (whether free or not) usually will not be considered for journal publication absent substantially new data, analysis, and/or interpretation.

At the time of submission, authors must disclose in a cover letter to the Editor details of related papers they have authored. Authors should describe in what form and how the work was previously disseminated and how the submitted manuscript differs from previously disseminated versions, and why its publication would represent a distinct and important contribution beyond those versions. The key point is to let the Editor know about any dissemination that will have, or is likely to have, occurred before the journal article is published rather than have it discovered during or after the review or editorial process. As part of the submittal, authors should include copies of other related papers that might be seen as covering the same material. Failure to disclose any previous dissemination could preclude publication in the journal or, if already published, could result in a notice in the journal about the failure and may result in a retraction of the article.

The journal's policy on prior dissemination is adapted from the "Common Statement on Prior Publication Policy" developed by the Editors of Health Services and Health Policy Journals (<http://www.hsr.org/hsr/information/authors/ppublication.jsp>), the "Publication Ethics Policies for Medical Journals" of the World Association of Medical Editors (<http://www.wame.org/resources/ethics-resources/publication-ethics-policies-for-medical-journals/>), as well as the *American Journal of Public Health* Policy on Ethical Principles (<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/misc/AJPHEthicsPolicyFinal110307.pdf>).

