

Conversation with the Editors-in-Chief

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The Milbank Memorial Fund

An endowed operating foundation working to improve population health and health equity by collaborating with state health policy leaders and connecting them with sound evidence and experience.

We advance our mission through:

- Leadership programs that develop state policymakers to become more effective leaders in population health and health equity;
- Programs that convene and support state health policymakers to advance progress in critical areas such as primary care and sustainable health care costs; and
- Publication of *The Milbank Quarterly* and evidence-based blogs, issue briefs, and reports.

The Milbank Quarterly

- Continuously published since 1923, the *Quarterly* is a multidisciplinary, editorially independent, peer-reviewed journal of population health and health policy.
- As our name implies, we publish quarterly issues, but all articles are published online in *early view form* as they become ready. Wiley, our publisher, then bundles articles into quarterly issues.
- We are known for *long-form research*, with no set limits on numbers of words, pages, references, or tables and figures.

Types of Articles

- **Original scholarship** – typically 5,000 to 10,000 words; mix of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research.
- **Perspectives** – typically 2,000 to 5,000 words that must *either*:
 1. Illuminate our understanding of an important issue, policy or strategy in a *new way*, or
 2. Present a *new policy idea or proposal* for solving an identified problem.
 - Perspectives are *evidence-based*, with appropriate citations from scientific and/or policy sources to support statements of fact and policy proposals. *They are not long opinion pieces.*
 - We publish opinions on our website, but they are invited from our stable of contributing writers.

Areas of Interest

Four areas of special interest:

- *Upstream policies and strategies for improving population health, especially those at the intersection between health and other sectors of public policy (e.g., education, housing, environment, criminal justice);*
- *Policies and strategies that seek to achieve health equity among all populations and individuals, including efforts to eliminate or mitigate factors that adversely affect the health and wellbeing of marginalized populations;*
- *State health policy, particularly new ideas and frameworks for improving health and health care at the state level; and*
- *Lessons for the US health care system that may be learned from other nations' health care systems.*

Some Metrics (2024)

- Impact Factor (Clarivate): 4.1
- Submissions received: 304
- Articles published: 41
- Acceptance rate: 14%
 - Time of submission to first decision: 8 days
 - 35% sent for peer review
 - Rejection not necessarily for lack of merit, but generally for poor fit (i.e., outside the journal's scope of interests), written for wrong audience, or clinical rather than policy-oriented
 - 40% of peer reviewed papers are invited to revise & resubmit

Some Tips for Authors

- Your cover letter should say why you chose the journal
- Clearly state the focus of your paper
- Format the paper and citations appropriately
- Avoid jargon
- Avoid unnecessary repetition
- Proofread your paper for typos before submitting

Tips on Organization

Introduction

- State the research question clearly

Methods

- Details are important (you are writing for reviewers who may be unfamiliar with your study and want to know what you did)
- Anticipate and prevent possible misunderstandings and/or criticisms
- Use supplemental appendices if appropriate

Findings

- Avoid unnecessary words and tables
- Don't lose track of the research question
- Don't interpret beyond what the data can support
- Use tables to guide discussion but don't repeat table data in the text

Tips on Organization

Discussion

- Relate findings to relevant literature
- Organize around take-home points
- Don't discuss issues beyond the scope of your study
- Acknowledge and discuss limitations

Conclusions

- Link back to the problem or issue laid out in the introduction
- Do not simply repeat points that have already been made
- Discuss future directions and implications for *policy* (not just the need for future research)

Responding to Reviews

- Very important to be responsive to comments and suggestions from reviewers & the editor
 - Point-by-point responses are essential
 - Revision likely to go back to original reviewers
- HOWEVER
 - You may disagree with some reviewer comments and suggestions, but you **must justify** why it is not feasible to make those changes
 - *The good news*: most “revise and resubmit” papers succeed in the end
 - Only a small percentage fail (usually because of a lack of responsiveness to reviewer comments)

Final Advice

- Read and *follow* the journal's instructions for authors:
 - <https://www.milbank.org/quarterly/for-authors/>
- Revise and *polish* before you submit
- Expect to *revise again* after you submit
- Most journals receive far more submissions than they can publish. Try not to give us reasons to reject your paper.
- Don't be discouraged from submitting in the future if you have a paper rejected.

Write and Submit
**(Even if you know it isn't perfect.
It never will be.)**