



## Becoming an *ImmunoHorizons* Author: Or How I Learned to Accept Myself

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## Becoming an *ImmunoHorizons* Author: Or How I Learned to Accept Myself

There are lots of ways to become *ImmunoHorizons* (*IH*) authors, which is still a very select group of outstanding scientists. My favorite way is this: work diligently as a reviewer for *The Journal of Immunology* (*The JI*) and *ImmunoHorizons* for years. Have your frequent and quality service recognized and have the honor of serving on one of their Editorial Boards, and then maybe take another board position. Then, with enough experience, apply to become Editor-in-Chief. I know this will work out for very few of you, but this is the best option. I found out that as Editor-in-Chief you can write Editorials, and because even Editorials are submitted through the online system, I can send myself acceptance e-mails. This was a perk of the job they never explained to me. Some days, when I'm getting rejections from everywhere else, I send in an Editorial and accept it, so I can feel accepted somewhere.

Now I realize not everyone will become the Editor-in-Chief, and maybe not everyone wants that (though honestly, it's a great job, so I'm not sure why). Luckily, there are other less time-consuming and career-spanning ways to become an *ImmunoHorizons* author. The most direct way is to submit an article. For those of you who have submitted a paper to *The JI* (and if you haven't, you should), the process is very similar. Submit the files. The submission goes out for peer review. A decision is made by The Most Reasonable Editorial Board in the business. In my last Editorial I outlined some of the types of papers we've published and what we're looking for (1). Remember, the criteria for an *ImmunoHorizons* paper are that the experiments are scientifically sound and that the conclusions are supported by the data. The work can be incremental and descriptive. That's why *IH* was conceived.

But there is another way to have an article accepted that is rapidly becoming the most frequent—the transfer of manuscripts from *The JI*. Let me explain the process. First, you have a manuscript submitted to *The JI*. It goes out for peer review and *The JI* Editorial team makes a decision. When the decision is that the paper is not going to meet the criteria at *The JI*, the Editors have the option of recommending transfer to *IH*. At that point The Most Reasonable Editorial Board in the business is called in to consult on whether the transfer is appropriate

and if the answer is yes, the Editor will provide some comments to direct any revisions before transfer. This is a real bonus provided to the authors of reports under consideration at *The JI*. If you get the invitation to transfer a manuscript to *IH*, it means an *IH* Editor has already looked at the paper, has said it seems like a good candidate for transfer, and has identified the important things to revise before it could be accepted at *IH*.

Then the authors get the decision. If they opt to transfer, the authors should revise the article as suggested and provide a rebuttal to the points in *The JI* review outlining what's been changed and what hasn't, just as if they were resubmitting the paper to *The JI*. If there are experiments suggested by *Ji* reviewers that the authors do not include in a revision, they should provide a rationale as to why. If the *IH* Editor wrote that no experiments are required for transfer, then simply writing "The reviewer had excellent suggestions, but these studies are beyond the scope of our submission to *ImmunoHorizons*" will be acceptable. Please do not do that if the Editor writes that additional studies or controls are required.

Another tip is that the cover letter and/or rebuttal should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief or the Editors at *IH*, not *The JI*. Authors should know to what journal they are submitting. Gene Oltz, the Editor-in-Chief of *The JI*, is an amazing scientist, the best Editor-in-Chief of all the journals at AAI, and it's an honor to be mistaken for him, but I hate getting his mail. Once the article is received, the rebuttal and revisions are reviewed by The Most Reasonable Editorial Board in the business. And again, here's another bonus. The Editors review the rebuttal and revisions and make a decision. There is generally no need for another level of review because we use the reviews already generated through *The JI*. This makes the *IH* Editorial decision process on transfers fast. Decisions within days. Days! I dare you to find a journal with a faster time to decision on transferred manuscripts. In fact, I double dare you. And I encourage you to take the opportunity to transfer from *The JI* to *IH* if it is offered. As an AAI journal, the success of *IH* supports the success of AAI.

Finally, there is another way to become an *ImmunoHorizons* author, which is by an invitation. One of the other types of articles published in *ImmunoHorizons* is in the *On The Horizons (OTH)* section. *OTH* articles were conceived to be a combination of review and commentary. We are soliciting articles particularly from junior (assistant professor level) faculty who are establishing themselves in their areas and have ideas on where a field should be developing as it moves toward the horizon. This is an exciting feature and we already have an excellent pipeline of authors for *OTH* articles in 2021. If you have ideas for one of these articles, I encourage you to write us ([infoih@aai.org](mailto:infoih@aai.org)) with a proposal containing a title and abstract for review.

Make your first steps toward becoming an *IH* author today: submit a new paper. Give more consideration to transferring your manuscripts from *The JI*. I look forward to the opportunity to accept your submissions, because honestly, it's more fulfilling than accepting myself.

**Mark H. Kaplan**

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On Twitter @statfourwork

## REFERENCES

1. Kaplan, M. H. 2021. *ImmunoHorizons*: what we're publishing. *ImmunoHorizons* 5: 133–134.