

Reflections on One Year of RRNMF — Medical Student Perspective

Breanna Tuhlei, University of Missouri-Columbia
Medical Student

I am a fourth-year MD-PhD student at the University of Missouri-Columbia, nearly done with MS3 year and about halfway through my PhD in neuroimmunology. I have had the privilege of collaborating with Dr. Barohn on this journal for almost one year. I happened to be introduced to Dr. Barohn by a faculty member I was doing research with and initially met with Dr. Barohn to discuss my endeavors as an MD-PhD student interested in neurology. He mentioned some of his struggles with launching a new project, the RRNMF journal, and I quickly seized this unique opportunity by volunteering myself and a fellow medical student to help. I was not actually sure what I would be doing but I was excited to be on the forefront of something new. I had been a copyeditor for the American Journal of Hospital Medicine at MU, and I was eager to continue building my experience with the editorial process and take on new responsibility. As an MD-PhD student, I have always been fascinated with the peer-review pipeline that manuscripts must go through to be published. Most of us do not get exposure to the intricacies of this process; we submit a manuscript through a website or email and then eagerly await further instructions, reviews, and hopefully acceptance.

During my experience as a managing editor for RRNMF, I have come to appreciate how much effort it

really takes to publish a manuscript. Manuscripts must first be screened and assigned to the appropriate team members. Reviewers must be assigned, notified, and followed up with. This feedback is communicated with authors, and then manuscripts are carefully combed for grammatical and typographical errors as well as ensuring the formatting is consistent across papers. These word documents are then transformed to their final layout and sent to authors for final approval. As one of the managing editors, I am responsible for guiding the manuscript through its journey in this pipeline and communicating each step with the authors, starting from submission by the authors and ending with all of us approving of the final product.

Perhaps the most enlightening step for me as a future physician-scientist has been to read the feedback from reviewers on the various manuscripts and observing how authors make changes accordingly. It is impressive to see collaboration on such a large scale – attending physicians and academics from literally all over the world coming together to critique each other's work and share ideas on these manuscripts. On a more practical level, I am more aware of some of the common pitfalls to avoid as I craft a manuscript and the scientific expectations I might hear from reviewers. Getting involved with a journal at any level is an experience I would strongly recommend for MD or PhD students interested in research. It can be difficult to find these opportunities but networking with as many colleagues as possible will often take one a long way. You never know who might be trying to launch a journal in your department!