

**Journal Publication Practices in Social Work**

**Final Report from the *Society for Social Work  
and Research* Presidential Task Force on Publications**

Submitted to the:

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and Research* Presidential Task Force on Publications

Task Force Co-Chairs:  
Jeffrey M. Jenson, Ph.D.  
University of Denver

Anne E. (Ricky) Fortune, Ph.D.  
University at Albany  
State University of New York

Task Force Members:  
Jose B. Ashford, Ph.D., Arizona State University  
Judith C. Baer, Ph.D., Rutgers University  
Richard P. Barth, Ph.D., University of Maryland  
Bill Cohen, B.S., Haworth Press  
Jorge Delva, Ph.D., University of Michigan  
Catherine N. Dulmus, Ph.D., University at Buffalo, State University of New York.  
Eileen Gambrell, Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley  
Lorraine M. Gutierrez, Ph.D., University of Michigan  
Kay S. Hoffman, Ph.D., University of Kentucky  
Gary Holden, D.S.W., New York University  
Schandale Kornegay, M.S.W., National Association of Social Workers Press (2006)  
Jeanne C. Marsh, Ph.D., University of Chicago  
William Meezan, D.S.W., Ohio State University  
Enola K. Proctor, Ph.D., Washington University  
Robert F. Schilling II, Ph.D., University of California-Los Angeles  
Michael R. Sosin, Ph.D., University of Chicago  
Haluk Soydan, Ph.D., University of Southern California  
Bruce A. Thyer, Ph.D., Florida State University  
Julia M. Watkins, Ph.D., Council on Social Work Education  
Trina R. Williams Shanks, Ph.D., University of Michigan

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### Abstract

The *Society for Social Work and Research* (SSWR) commissioned a Presidential Task Force on Publications (PTFP) in 2006 to identify and address deficiencies in social work journal publication practices. The mission of PTFP was to examine the strengths and weaknesses of journal practices and to establish a communication structure for exploring issues germane to the improvement of publication processes for social work research. Findings and recommendations of the PTFP are presented to the SSWR Board in this final report.

Academic journals are primary outlets for the dissemination of theoretical and empirical findings in nearly all disciplines and professions. In social work, students, practitioners, educators, and researchers rely on published journal articles for information about the etiology of individual and social problems. Articles appearing in social work journals also provide important evidence pertaining to the efficacy of interventions and the effects of social policies aimed at preventing and treating such problems. In many respects, the quality of articles published in social work journals reflects the strength of the profession's underlying knowledge base. Thus, it is critical that core social work journals be organized and managed to maximize the availability, timeliness, utility, and impact of published manuscripts.

The publication standards and review practices of social work journals have been the subject of considerable concern in the past several decades. Prior studies have examined diverse aspects of journal publication including the scholarly records of editorial board members (Lindsey, 1976; Pardeck, 1992a; 1992b; Pardeck & Meinert, 1999a, 1999b), the quality and reliability of manuscript reviews (Epstein, 1990, 2004; Kirk & Franke, 1997) and the assessment of confirmational response bias to determine if reviewers and editors are more likely to accept studies reporting positive outcomes than negative ones (Epstein, 1990; 2004). Additionally, investigators have examined the impact of journals on the field (Lindsey & Kirk, 1992) and the decision-making and editorial practices used by journals (Barker & Thyer, 2005; Thyer & Myers, 2003). Collectively, results from these and other studies reveal modest scholarly records among many journal editorial board members, considerable levels of variation in the quality and reliability of manuscript reviews, mixed findings pertaining to the presence of

confirmational response bias, low impact scores for many journals, and perceived inefficiencies in review practices.

Concern about inefficiencies in the publication practices of social work journals has led to several recent calls for reform. In 2005, the editors-in-chief of *Social Work* (Marsh, 2005), *Social Work Research* (Jenson, 2005), and the *Journal of Social Work Education* (Valentine, 2005) each identified strategies to improve the efficiency and the transparency of their respective journal's manuscript review practices. In addition, a group of scholars concerned about the process and quality of publication and peer review practices in social work journals participated in a roundtable session at the 2005 Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) conference. This discussion led to the publication of the *Miami Statement*, a set of recommendations aimed at improving the quality of journal publications in social work (Schilling et al., 2005). Among the group's major concerns were issues associated with the limited impact of social work journals, the poor quality of manuscript reviews, the slow pace of review and publication, and lack of leadership in journal publication.

The renewed attention to journal publication practices in social work afforded a unique opportunity to improve the profession's core dissemination outlets. In response, the SSWR Board of Directors created the Presidential Task Force on Publications (PTFP) in January 2006. PTFP members included editors, publishers, scholars, and consumers who shared common interests in improving the quality of journal publications in social work. The mission of the PTFP was to examine the strengths and weaknesses of journal publication practices and to establish a communication structure for exploring issues

germane to the improvement of publication processes for social work research. Findings and recommendations of the PTFP are described below.

### Method

PTFP members identified a list of process and quality concerns in journal publication practices during its inaugural meeting at the 2006 SSWR annual conference in San Antonio. Following the conference, five PTFP working task groups were formed to examine: 1) organizational models used by publishers of social work journals; 2) publication standards in social work and allied disciplines; 3) manuscript submission and review procedures in social work; 4) dissemination of journal practices and processes; and 5) contextual issues surrounding publication.<sup>1</sup> Survey methods were used to obtain opinions about publication practices from a sample of social work journal editors and from editors in closely related fields. In addition, extensive reviews of publishers' official documents, websites, and related written materials were conducted. Data were collected in 2006 and 2007. A second meeting of the PTFP was held at the 2007 SSWR annual conference in San Francisco to review year-one progress. Specific methodological notes relevant to each task group's findings are detailed below.

### Findings

#### Organizational Models used by Publishers

An analysis of the major publishers of social work journals revealed two dominant organizational models for journal publication. In one model, centralized organizational systems are used by publishers to receive and manage manuscripts. Centralized models are based on processes that preserve an author's anonymity until a

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the five PTFP task groups are shown in the Appendix.

final decision to publish is made by an editor. In this approach, manuscripts are submitted directly to a publisher. Typically, a staff member assigns manuscripts to reviewers (sometimes with guidance from a categorical matching system and/or advice from an editor). Completed manuscript reviews are returned to the publisher who in turn sends the completed reviews to an editor. Finally, editors convey a publication decision about the manuscript to publishing staff who then inform the author.

A centralized model requires an effective communication system between publishing staff and editors because manuscripts are submitted and then routed through procedures controlled by a publisher. As a result, the model involves a communication pattern among authors, publishing staff, and editors that is not present in other organizational models. In social work, member organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) use this approach. NASW publishes four journals: *Social Work*, *Social Work Research*, *Health and Social Work*, and *Children and Schools*. CSWE publishes the *Journal of Social Work Education*.

A second organizational model uses a decentralized system. In decentralized models, editors are charged with assigning and sending submitted manuscripts directly to reviewers. Reviews are returned directly to the editor who then renders a publication decision. Importantly, this model eliminates the need for the centralized processing function described above and allows editors to effectively screen-out inappropriate manuscripts prior to reviewer assignment. While editors working in a decentralized model know the identity of an author when a manuscript is submitted, anonymity is preserved between authors and assigned reviewers. *Research on Social Work Practice*,

*Children and Youth Services Review*, and most other social work journals use a decentralized model.<sup>2</sup>

Anecdotal evidence suggests that journals based in centralized systems require more time to process manuscripts and render publication decisions than journals in decentralized models. This perception is attributed generally to the extra processing steps necessary to receive and manage manuscripts that are inherent in a centralized model. Unfortunately, empirical evidence to compare the timeliness of journal publication practices using centralized and decentralized organizational models is not available. Further, the field lacks a forum or mechanism for publishers and editors to report key indicators such as average time for completion of manuscript reviews and time to publication.

PTFP task group members also identified the process used by centralized publishing models to assign manuscripts to reviewers as problematic in some cases. Specifically, PTFP members noted that the centralized method of manuscript assignment is adversely affected when publishing staff do not possess the substantive or methodological expertise to make appropriate manuscript assignment decisions. Members indicated that this may be particularly true for manuscripts submitted to journals such as *Social Work Research* because these articles typically contain very advanced methodological and analytical techniques. In such cases, it is unlikely that publishing staff possess the skills necessary to correctly assign papers to appropriate reviewers. Similarly, publication personnel do not always have the substantive background or skills to screen-out inappropriate manuscripts at the point of submission.

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<sup>2</sup> A decentralized model that blinds an editor to an author's identity is a third organizational system that could be considered by social work journal publishers.

*Editor appointments and organizational models.* The qualifications of individuals selected as editors of major social work journals is an important topic in the context of organizational publishing models. At least one prior study noted that some social work journal editors had marginal scholarly credentials (Pardeck & Meinert, 1999a). In view of this criticism, PTFP organizational task group members discussed expectations regarding the prior experience and scholarly credentials of social work journal editors. This discussion recognized that member organizations who publish journals have existing criteria and processes for selecting the editors-in-chief of their respective journals that may sometimes be at odds with scholarly credentials and accomplishments. While such organizational processes warrant consideration and respect, PTFP members suggested that persons appointed as editors of social work journals should possess:

1. A demonstrated understanding of the journal publication process;
2. Significant and demonstrated experience in issues affecting social work education, practice, and scholarship;
3. An accomplished publication record that includes refereed book chapters, books, curricula, and reports, and in particular, articles in scholarly journals;
4. Organizational standing commensurate with a tenured-level position in social work or a related discipline;
5. Analytical and methodological skills consistent with the types of manuscripts submitted to their respective journal; and
6. Sufficient time, commitment, and resources to conduct editorial duties in a timely fashion.

*Electronic submission and review of manuscripts.* Most publishers in the social sciences accept manuscripts and process reviews on-line. Importantly, electronic submission speeds up decision making because it eliminates or reduces the need to produce and distribute hard copies of manuscripts. A majority of social work journals have initiated on-line submission and review processes. One exception, the centralized model used by NASW Press, has yet to implement an on-line system at the time this report was written (plans call for implementation of such a system by the end of 2008). CSWE Press, the other dominant social work publisher that uses a centralized system, initiated an on-line submission and review system in 2006.

#### Publication Guidelines and Standards in Social Work and Allied Disciplines

A second PTFP task group examined publication standards in social work and other disciplines. Two related issues were studied: 1) the use of reporting standards for empirical research; and 2) the availability of a comprehensive set of journal publication guidelines in social work.

*Reporting standards.* PTFP members found that significant strides in reporting standards pertaining to the submission of manuscripts have been realized across social science and health disciplines in recent years. For example, published reporting standards developed by groups representing the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (Moher, Schulz, & Altman, 2001), Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Non-Randomized Designs (Des Jarlais, Lyles, & Crepaz, 2004), the American Educational Research Association (American Educational Research Association, 2006), and Society for Prevention Research (Flay, Biglan, Boruch, et al., 2005) have been disseminated widely in the past five years. The purposes of these and other standards are

to: 1) improve the overall quality, rigor, and consistency of articles submitted to journal outlets; 2) facilitate the interpretation of research by using consistent reporting formats; and 3) help practitioners and policy makers accurately weigh the evidentiary status of claims made by authors about assessment, intervention, analytical methods, and findings.

Only one published example of reporting standards located by the PTFP task group originated in social work. Recently, a recommended checklist for authors submitting manuscripts to *Research on Social Work Practice (RSWP)* was developed by Holosko (2006). This document offers authors a checklist of items that represent format and methodological elements typically included in an empirical paper. The checklist is recommended, not required, by *RSWP* at the current time. Detailed publication standards that are pertinent across all or most social work journals do not exist.

PTFP members agreed that standards are a useful way to increase the quality and consistency of manuscript submissions. However, they also noted that existing standards are limited with regard to reporting results from qualitative studies. Members also acknowledged that the required use of standards by journal publishers might alienate international authors who are unfamiliar with American protocols. Therefore, members of the task group recommend that social work journal publishers inform authors about the availability of the following standards and guidelines during the manuscript preparation and submission process:

- *Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials* for reporting the outcomes of randomized trials (Moher, Schulz, & Altman, 2001).

- *Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Non-randomized Designs* for reporting results obtained in non-randomized investigations (Des Jarlais, Lyles, & Crepaz, 2004).
- *Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research, Section 5* for reporting of qualitative studies (American Educational Research Association, 2006).

*Journal publication guidelines.* Journal publication guidelines exist in several disciplines as a means to improve the overall quality of submitted manuscripts. For example, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) (2004) has developed publication standards applicable to authors, editors, and publishers of medical journals. These standards, available on-line at <http://www.icmje.org>, are disseminated widely and applied frequently by the publishers and editors of medical journals. The ICMJE guidelines address nearly every aspect of the publication process, including details about the submission and construction of manuscripts. No parallel document is available in social work. The development of detailed and comprehensive guidelines aimed at writing manuscripts for publication in social work journals demands further study. If undertaken, the ICMJE guidelines offer a guide to the development of standards in social work.

#### Manuscript Submission and Review Procedures

Manuscript submission and review practices are key elements of concern to authors, editors, and publishers. The *Miami Statement* and other recently-published papers have renewed prior concerns about the inefficiencies of publication practices in

social work (Jenson, 2005; Marsh, 2005; Schilling et al., 2005). Timeliness, quality, and ethical concerns have all been noted in these published reports.

Members of a PTFP work group completed several tasks in an effort to assess the state of submission and review procedures in social work journals. Initially, the group's discussions led to a decision to extend the work of the *Miami Statement* by drafting a set of best practice suggestions that were then amended to the original *Miami Statement*. This document was drafted and reviewed by other PTFP members. Desiring additional input, the group next sought independent comments from the editors of social work and closely related journals. A list of social work journal editors was developed and supplemented with a smaller group of journal editors from ancillary fields (approximately 10% of the total sample). E-mail correspondence was used to send the *Miami Statement*, the work group's proposed additions, and a set of instructions about the comments being requested to 93 editors in July 2006. Eighty-eight surveys were delivered successfully and 30 responses (34%) were returned. Unstructured responses from the editors were categorized by one work group member into general comments regarding manuscript submission and review procedures and specific comments related to particular suggestions contained within the *Miami Statement* or proposed additions. This sorting was then reviewed by other members.

The work group's report and its 49 detailed recommendations appear in Holden, Thyer, Baer, Delva, Dulmus, & Williams Shanks (2008). The authors' findings point to concerns that are similar in scope and substance to those expressed in the previously published *Miami Statement* and suggest that social work editors are clearly aware of the

shortcomings in publication practices in the profession. Several key findings presented by Holden et al. (2008) warrant special emphasis and are discussed below.

*Editorial board appointments.* Manuscript reviewers, often listed as editorial board members in journal mastheads, are critically important to the quality of journals. Editors depend on high-quality manuscript reviews to inform their publication decisions. The work group recommended that journals publish an annual call for self-nominations in an effort to recruit motivated manuscript reviewers.

*Manuscript assignments.* The previous discussion of organizational publishing models highlighted the fact that some publishers assume responsibility for assigning manuscripts to reviewers while others allocate this responsibility to editors. Regardless of the model employed, the work group recommended that editors be charged with assigning all manuscripts to reviewers.

*Timeliness.* The timeliness of manuscript review processes has been frequently identified as a problem in social work journals. To address this concern, work group members recommend that authors be promptly notified (by e-mail within 48 hours) of a publisher's receipt of a manuscript. Further, all reviews should be standardized to the degree possible and returned to editors or publishers within four weeks.

*Review of page proofs and editing by publishing staff.* An author's opportunity to review her or his final manuscript following acceptance and prior to publication varies by publisher. Most publishers send final page proofs to authors for their approval. However, some publishers send pages prior to the proof stage; others do not send proofs until the journal issue is printed. In addition, survey findings revealed that in some cases

publishing staff engage in minor editing of final typeset pages without an author's knowledge or approval.

#### Dissemination of Journal Practices and Processes

A fourth PTFP group examined the broad issues concerning the dissemination of journal practices and processes in social work. As expected, PTFP members noted that all publishers of social work journals present information specific to manuscript submission processes and practices in their published documents. This information is critical to authors and is necessary to ensure a good fit between article submissions and a journal's purpose and mission. On a larger scale, PTFP members found that dissemination and information-sharing outlets regarding broader issues relevant to journal practices and processes were limited or non-existent. For example, prior to 2007, there was no single written or electronic source of information about social work journals available to authors.

The PTFP dissemination work group explored the idea of creating an on-line source of information for authors, editors, and publishers. One option examined was a website aimed at providing a forum for dialog about publication issues. In 2007, such a site was developed on the SSWR electronic web page upon the recommendation of the PTFP task group. The site may be viewed at <http://sswrptfp.wordpress.com/>. Still in its infancy, the electronic site offers a source for the discussion of journal publication questions and concerns. Similar sites have been in place in other disciplines for some time. For example, one effective dissemination outlet is the American Psychological Association's *Author's Corner* (American Psychological Association, 2008). The

*Author's Corner* is a source of news regarding psychology journals and is available online at <http://www.apa.org/journals/authors/homepage.html>.

#### Contextual Factors and the Quality of Social Work Journal Publications

A final PTFP group examined contextual issues associated with journal publication. This group studied the issue of institutional support for journal editors and assessed incentives and rewards for faculty participation in the manuscript review process. Members also discussed ways to attract more high-quality manuscripts to social work journals.

*Institutional support for journal editors.* Editors of most social work journals receive little or no institutional support from their own departments, colleges, or universities. Typically, editors receive little or no formal compensation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many editors negotiate with their departments to secure release time from other duties. However, many editors do not benefit from the assistance of on-site staff or personnel. The lack of institutional support for editorial positions distinguishes social work from disciplines such as psychology and medicine.

*Incentives and rewards for faculty participation in the manuscript review process.* Reviewing manuscripts takes considerable time from other scholarly and educational responsibilities. If asked, most administrators and faculty members in schools of social work would likely recognize the critical role that high-quality manuscript reviews perform in advancing knowledge in the discipline. However, few schools provide concrete incentives or rewards to encourage faculty participation in the manuscript review process. In fact, effort devoted to writing reviews is seldom assessed and is only cursorily rewarded in faculty merit, promotion, and tenure decisions. The

lack of consideration given by schools of social work to faculty members who choose to write high-quality manuscript reviews may discourage others from participating in the review process. Unfortunately, a reluctance to review manuscripts may in turn foster a climate in social work departments that places little value on active involvement in the profession's key journals.

*Attracting high-quality manuscript submissions.* Many scholars have noted that some authors do not submit their papers to social work journals because of a commonly-held perception that the profession's journals have a relatively low impact when compared to other social science journals (Schilling et al., 2005). A manuscript's impact on the field is best measured by a ranking system developed by Thompson Scientific and reported annually in the *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR). Recent JCR rankings reveal relatively low impact scores for social work journals (Blazick, 2006). Journal impact scores, a ratio created from the number of citations received by articles published in a journal and the total number of articles published in the journal over a specific time interval, offer a quantitative indicator of how frequently a journal is cited. For 28 social work journals assessed in 2006, impact scores range from .06 to 1.62 (Blazick, 2006).<sup>3</sup> This compares to rankings that frequently exceed 2.0 in other disciplines. Rankings for social work journals in 2006 are shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

It is important to note that the calculation and interpretation of journal impact factor scores is not straightforward. For example, some scholars have suggested that variations in the coverage of social work journals by entities such as *Social Work*

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<sup>3</sup> In 2007, PTFP members asked Thompson Scientific to remove the *American Journal of Community Psychology* and the *Journal of Community Psychology* from the list of social work journals. The request is pending.

*Abstracts* and *PsychINFO* (Holden, Barker, Covert-Vail, Rosenberg, & Cohen, in press) may have an effect on journal impact factor scores. Further, the utility of impact factor scores for academic review purposes has been questioned (Holden, Rosenberg, Barker, & Onghera, 2006). The calculation, interpretation, and use of impact factors scores require further research that is beyond the scope of the PTFP.

A second problem attracting high quality manuscripts may be related to scholars' perceptions of the timeliness of review and publication processes in social work. PTFP data collection revealed that some authors simply do not submit manuscripts to social work journals due to a concern about length of time to publication. This is a problem for all authors, particularly for young scholars who are concerned about establishing pre-tenure publication records.

#### Summary and Recommendations

Anecdotal and empirical evidence examined by the PTFP concerning publication processes in social work reveal inefficiencies in how manuscripts are submitted, assigned, and reviewed. These inefficiencies pose problems to authors and professionals who rely on the field's journals as important dissemination outlets. A summary of PTFP findings, followed by recommended action steps, follows.

1. Two major organizational models are used by publishers. Centralized models use publishing staff to assign and route manuscripts while decentralized models empower editors with all assignment and routing functions. Manuscript assignments made by staff members in centralized models are prone to error when publishing personnel do not have the substantive expertise to make informed assignments. In addition, review processes are

often prolonged in centralized systems because they require extensive communication among authors, publishing staff, and editors.

- Recommendations:
  - Manuscripts should be assigned to reviewers by journal editors with requisite substantive expertise. Journal editors should have primary responsibility for manuscript assignments, regardless of the organizational model used by a publisher.
  - Data assessing the length of time that is required to assign, review, and publish manuscripts in centralized and decentralized publishing models should be collected and compared.
  
- 2. Persons appointed as editors of major social work journals do not always possess the scholarly records and experience commensurate with performing the duties of an editor.
  - Recommendations:
    - Social work journal editors should have: 1) a demonstrated understanding of the journal publication process; 2) experience in issues affecting social work education, practice, and scholarship; 3) an accomplished scholarly record that includes the publication of refereed book chapters, books, curricula, and reports, and in particular, articles in scholarly journals; 4) organizational standing commensurate with a tenured-level position in social work or a related discipline; 5) analytical and

methodological skills consistent with the types of manuscripts submitted to their respective journal; and 6) sufficient time, commitment, and resources necessary to conduct editorial duties in a timely fashion.

- Processes and criteria used by publishers to guide the selection of journal editors should be transparent and published on a periodic basis.

3. Electronic submission and review procedures are not offered by all publishers. Such systems are widely used in other disciplines. The lack of electronic submission procedures discourages authors from submitting to social work journals.

- Recommendation:

- All social work journal publishers should implement electronic manuscript submission and review processes by 2008.

4. Social work journals and publishers have failed to adopt or recommend reporting standards or comprehensive guidelines to authors. Such standards and guidelines send important messages about the quality of manuscripts and are widely disseminated to authors in other disciplines.

- Recommendations:

- Social work journal publishers should inform authors about the following standards and guidelines during the manuscript preparation and submission process: 1) *Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trails* for reporting the outcomes of randomized

trials (Moher, Schulz, & Altman, 2001); 2) *Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Non-randomized Designs* for reporting results obtained in non-randomized investigations (Des Jarlais, Lyles, & Crepaz, 2004); and 3) *Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research, Section 5* for reporting of qualitative studies (American Educational Research Association, 2006). These standards should be recommended, but not required.

- The profession should consider the development of a more ambitious set of comprehensive guidelines aimed at writing manuscripts for publication in social work journals. Such an effort should involve a national group of editors, distinguished scholars, and publishers. If undertaken, guidelines developed in the medical profession by the ICMJE should be used as a template.
5. Anecdotal evidence indicates there is considerable variation in time to first decision and time to publication across journals. Standards that identify acceptable periods of time for these critical tasks do not exist in social work. Further, data revealing key indicators such as length of time to publication are not readily available across journals.
- Recommendation:
    - Social work publishers and journal editors should examine and consider adopting recommendations pertaining to manuscript

submission, review, and publication processes identified in the *Miami Statement* (Schilling et al., 2005) and detailed in the PTFP report by Holden et al. (2008).<sup>4</sup>

6. Standards for manuscript reviews differ widely by journals and publishers.

This in turn leads to considerable variation in the quality of manuscript reviews received by editors.

- Recommendation:

- Manuscript review guidelines should be developed by an independent group of social work editors and former editors.

These guidelines should be reviewed by a panel of social work scholars and publishers for possible adoption.

7. Publishers differ with regard to editorial practices following acceptance of a manuscript. Most publishers send final page proofs to authors for their approval. However, some publishers send pages prior to the proof stage; others do not send proofs until the journal issue is printed. In other cases, anecdotal evidence indicates that editing is sometimes done by publishers without an author's approval.

- Recommendation:

- All publishers should have policies stating that authors must approve final pages and editing of a manuscript prior to publication.

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<sup>4</sup> See (Schilling et al., 2005) and Holden et al. (2008) for a complete set of recommendations pertaining to the timely processing, review, and publication of submitted manuscripts.

8. Low impact scores and perceived inefficiencies in processing manuscripts may be discouraging scholars from submitting manuscripts to social work journals.
  - Recommendation:
    - Data assessing impact scores, journal submission and acceptance rates, and time to publication for social work journals should be collected annually by an independent group of editors, scholars, and publishers as a way to help authors evaluate a journal's impact. The newly-developed SSWR website should be explored as an outlet for this information.
9. Systematic efforts to reduce the organizational impediments that limit faculty participation in editorial leadership and discourage involvement in writing manuscript reviews are lacking.
  - Recommendations:
    - Deans and directors in departments and schools of social work should provide leadership in efforts aimed at finding ways to reward faculty members who serve as editors or manuscript reviewers for scholarly journals.
    - To build a scholarly culture that recognizes the importance of journal publications, doctoral students should receive training and mentoring in writing manuscript reviews.
10. Leadership necessary to advance the efficiency and quality of social work journal publications is lacking in the profession.

- Recommendation:
  - The profession should explore the development of an ongoing commission charged with improving journal publication practices in social work. Such a commission should include editors, journal board members, publishers, and social work scholars.

### Summary

We know a considerable amount about the strengths and weaknesses of social work journal publications. Preliminary PTFP findings confirm that significant reforms are needed to improve the quality of social work journal publication practices. Future efforts should focus on articulating and implementing a plan to encourage the major publishers of social work journals to address the issues noted in this report.

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Table 1. Journal Impact Factor Scores for Social Work, 2006

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Rank	Journal	Total Cites	Impact Factor
1	Child Abuse and Neglect	3158	1.623
2	Am Journal of Community Psychology	2081	1.525
3	Child Maltreatment	509	1.345
4	Journal of Social Policy	343	1.053
5	Health and Social Care in the Community	498	1.016
6	Journal of Community Psychology	926	.966
7	Children and Youth Services Review	686	.963
8	Social Service Review	456	.896
9	Research on Social Work Practice	374	.789
10	Health and Social Work	478	.787
11	Social Work	985	.779
12	Journal of Social Work Education	495	.733
13	Family Relations	1012	.731
14	Social Work Research	286	.722
15	British Journal of Social Work	500	.636
16	Child Welfare	659	.517
17	Journal of Social Work Practice	65	.418
18	Families in Society	424	.368
19	International Journal of Social Welfare	107	.349
20	International Social Work	183	.337
21	Journal of Social Service Research	182	.324
22	Social Work and Health Care	381	.295
23	Clinical Social Work Journal	171	.265
24	Administration in Social Work	156	.252
25	Asia Pacific Social Work	14	.252
26	Affilia	124	.231
27	Smith Studies in Social Work	45	.081
28	Indian Journal of Social Work	40	.058

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Note. Data are from *Journal Citation Reports* (Blazick, 2006).

Appendix

Presidential Task Force on Publications  
Society for Social Work and Research

Task Group Membership

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Society for Social Work and Research

Task Group Membership

Group #1

Organizational Models used by Publishers

Jeffrey M. Jenson, Chair  
Bill Cohen  
Kay S. Hoffman  
Shandale Kornegay (2006)  
William Meezan

Principal areas of investigation:

- review organizational models used by publishers;
- identify publishing house policies that define how editors, reviewers, authors, and staff interact and process manuscripts; and
- describe strengths and weaknesses of alternate models.

Group #2

Publication Standards in Social Work and Allied Disciplines

Jeffrey M. Jenson, Chair  
Eileen Gambrill  
Haluk Soydan

Principal areas of investigation:

- review information pertaining to publication standards and practices in social work;
- identify publication standards and models from other fields, including standards developed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors; and
- identify formats used to report systematic reviews and clinical trials.

Group #3

Manuscript Submission and Review Procedures

Judith C. Baer, Co-Chair  
Jorge Delva  
Catherine N. Dulmus  
Gary Holden, Co-Chair  
Bruce A. Thyer, Co-Chair  
Julia M. Watkins  
Trina R. Williams Shanks

Principal areas of investigation:

- identify article submission formats;
- examine timeliness of publisher responses to article submissions;
- examine timeliness of manuscript reviews;
- review quality of manuscript reviews; and
- examine editing and publication practices following acceptance of journal articles.

Group #4

Dissemination of Journal Practices and Processes

Richard P. Barth, Chair

Robert F. Schilling, II

Enola K. Proctor

Principal areas of investigation:

- identify methods to promote dissemination of journal practices and processes; and
- examine strategies to inform potential authors and readers of these practices.

Group #5

Contextual Issues and Concerns

Anne E. (Ricky) Fortune, Chair

Jose B. Ashford

Lorraine M. Gutierrez

Jeanne C. Marsh

Michael R. Sosin

Principal areas of investigation:

- describe organizational impediments to enhancing journal publication practices;  
and
- consider broad-based incentives to improve the quality of social work journals.