

Special issue: Getting PrEP to the people: opportunities, challenges, and examples of successful health services models of PrEP implementation

Meet the Editors

Iryna Zablotska

Who you are and what you do?

I am an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health at the University of Sydney with a significant expertise in epidemiology of infectious diseases. My main research interests are focused on risk behaviour, behavioural surveillance and biomedical prevention of HIV. I am known for my research on PrEP in Australia and I have worked on policy development on PrEP.

What things make you want to push the accept button when you see a paper?

- Sound methodology
- Unequivocal results
- Novelty of research idea/s and methods
- An engaging, well-written and clear story

What things make you want to push the reject button?

- Poorly written submissions (particularly from native English speakers)
- Lack of focus in the manuscript
- Methods of questionable quality, inappropriately used or underdeveloped
- Results poorly written and/or poorly interpreted, which show a lack of understanding of one's own research findings
- Discussion which appears to be disconnected with the research, or research made fit to justify the conclusions

Advice for authors

- Please make sure you fully understand the work you want to publish before you start the manuscript.
- Make sure you are submitting the piece that is of highest quality you can prepare (have advice of your colleagues and co-authors in polishing it).
- A good story matters. Make your piece not only sound and consistent, but also engaging.
- Read the journal's advice for authors on how to prepare and submit the manuscript and proof read all pieces of your submission before hitting the 'submit' button.



Iryna Zablotska

Jared Baeten

Who you are and what you do?

I am Vice Chair and Professor in the Department of Global Health at the University of Washington, where I am also Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology. My research focuses on the prevention of HIV-1 and other sexually transmitted diseases, including clinical trials of novel prevention interventions, epidemiologic studies of risk factors for HIV-1 transmission, work at the interface of HIV-1 prevention and reproductive health, and behavioural, translational, and implementation science research aimed at optimising prevention delivery. I led the Partners PrEP Study and MTN-020/ASPIRE, randomised clinical trials that demonstrated the efficacy of oral tenofovir-based pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and the dapivirine vaginal ring for protection against HIV-1 acquisition. I direct the University of Washington/Fred Hutch Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) and I am Co-Principal Investigator of the NIH-funded Microbicides Trials Network.

What things make you want to push the accept button when you see a paper?

Obviously, we do this kind of work because of the opportunity to discover things that are new and exciting – that's what research is all about. More than that, though, is work that will have impact – change thinking, evolve practice, and improve health at scale; work that shows glimmers of impact are the most exciting for me. Finally, papers that tell their story well – that read well, that don't try to pack too much in, that interpret in a smart and clear way – are always the most pleasurable ones to read.

What things make you want to push the reject button?

Papers that are too dense, too confusing, too narrow in thinking.

Advice for authors

Practice writing – read work out loud, write more papers, mentor others in writing, take up opportunities to be mentored.



Jared Baeten

Nittaya Phanuphak

Who you are and what you do?

I am Chief of PREVENTION at the Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. I currently lead the Key Population-Led Health Services model which has HIV testing, pre-/post-exposure prophylaxis and antiretroviral treatment dispensing provided to men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women (TGW) by trained lay providers who are members of MSM and TGW communities in Thailand. I strongly advocate for national and regional efforts to certify, legalise and identify financing mechanisms to sustain this model.

What things make you want to push the accept button when you see a paper?

A thoughtful and courageous discussion based on study findings is a major part when considering a paper. Sometimes methodology is not perfect. However, that should not discourage the authors to bring out the best message their study could still robustly support. Readers can learn a lot from the study limitations as well.

What things make you want to push the reject button?

A 'replication' study which the authors could not explain well why it needs to be repeated again. It does not seem fair in terms of time and resources needed to be spent on this type of study whether you are looking at it from the viewpoints of study participants, funder or reviewers. Also, a paper in which the authors try to make a conclusion vaguely related to their study findings will usually trigger the rejection.

Advice for authors

It is very useful to constantly think, throughout the whole research cycle, about how you are going to write up your paper. As you frequently think about why you are doing this study, what you are doing, and how you could improve the study to address potential limitations, you continuously sharpen your mind to be ready for the actual writing. The Discussion part could be completed even before the study ends!



Nittaya Phanuphak

Sheena McCormack

Who you are and what you do?

I am a clinical scientist working mainly at the MRC Clinical Trials Unit at UCL coordinating HIV prevention trials (vaccines, PrEP and testing), but also a consultant physician at Chelsea and Westminster running a PrEP clinic at 56 Dean Street, and an honorary chair at Imperial College.

What things make you want to push the accept button when you see a paper?

When the story is clear, and the results support the interpretation without exaggeration.

What things make you want to push the reject button?

Nonsense, wrong design for the question, lack of data, gross inconsistencies. I know how much work goes into clinical trials so I am not put off by unexciting results – they all contribute to the evidence. It's disappointing if a study was under-powered but this cannot always be helped.

Advice for authors

Don't just check it on the screen – print the manuscript. Quality counts for more than quantity.



Sheena McCormack

Jason Ong

Who you are and what you do?

I am an academic sexual health physician. I have joint appointments at Monash University, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Bristol. My main areas of interest are in economic evaluations, measuring health preferences and infectious disease modelling to improve sexual health among key populations in a variety of settings including low- and middle-income countries.

What things make you want to push the accept button when you see a paper?

Papers with a clearly defined research question and detailed, replicable methodology that has potential to impact policies or spur new research.

What things make you want to push the reject button?

Incoherent papers that are poorly structured, difficult to follow what was actually done, and with no clear discussion of how it contributes to our current understanding of the topic.

Advice for authors

Utilise the relevant 'best practice' guidelines (e.g. PRISMA for systematic reviews, CHEERS for economic evaluations, CONSORT for randomised controlled trials, STROBE for observational studies, COREQ for qualitative studies) to ensure that all relevant information is included in your manuscript. As you go through the sometimes arduous gauntlet of the peer-review process, turn every critique into an opportunity to refine your research or even spur new ideas for future work.



Jason Ong