



## Medical Humanities

### Special Issues

At *Medical Humanities*, there are two different types of Special Issues (SI) and both are actively encouraged by the Editor (Brandy Schillace). We see these SI as a valuable means of expanding the conversation around important themes, from issues of social justice to aspects of health policy. In addition, SI offer a means of opening a path to publication for those from the Global South and other under-represented populations by offering a means of supportive content delivery—both as full special issues and as shorter special sections or research forums. Below we detail the two types of SI.

#### **1. Funded Fast Track: Themed Content**

We offer fast-track special issues for those with funded projects. A guest editor may submit a proposal for a special issue to the Editor (Brandy Schillace) after articles have been solicited and abstracts collected for review from the authors. A special issue will contain 12-18 original research articles of 5000-9000 words in length, an introduction, and the option of two commentaries. [Note: a smaller number of articles is also permitted, but will run as part of our Research Forum as a special section]. We will work to get the pieces reviewed swiftly for appearance within the year (possibly as a fifth issue). Examples include Wellcome research projects in the medical humanities and other grant-funded research for open-access content. Previous themes have included: Transplant Ethics, Psychosomatics, Genetics, Cardiac Care, Hearing Impairment, Pain, Reproductive Counseling, Health Policy and Emotion, and South African Medical Humanities.

#### **2. Path to Publication (P2P): Research from the Global South/Under-represented scholars**

Those in under-funded areas, in vulnerable communities, and in the Global South struggle to be represented in our journals. Path to publication offers a guided two-year process by which guest editors can submit a themed special issue with workshops and mini-conferences (in dialogue with the Editor in Chief) to help support contributions prior to their official submission to the journal. The feedback and guidance, along with draft revisions overseen by the guest editors, make for much stronger and more competitive pieces upon submission. As with all of our articles, once in submission, the authors will be allowed two rounds of revisions. We are seeking Special Issue submissions right now from India, Southeast Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. The Path to Publication is also open to other under-represented and under-funded scholars.

\*Additional information for Path to Publication follows the primary guidelines

**a. Path to Publication special section/ research forum**

In recognition that underrepresented scholars also face support hurdles that make it difficult to support a full (12-15 article) special issue, we also provide P2P for shorter special sections (which have been called 'research forum' at the journal). These special sections would operate in much the same way, with the same support detailed below, but contain around 5 article submissions.

***Guidelines and Process for Both SI Types:***

Guest Editor's must produce a detailed proposal with a rationale, list of authors and affiliations where applicable, article titles, article types (original articles, short responses, etc) and layout.

- Only peer reviewed submission categories may be included in the special issue, along with a commentary (optional) and an introduction. (The journal blog does allow for book reviews, interviews, visual arts, audio, and debates should you wish to make use of these for promotion of the special issue, if and when accepted.)
- All articles must be solicited and abstracts complete before the proposed special issue can be submitted. The original proposal will be reviewed by the Editor in Chief and Associate Editors, with revisions provided if necessary.
- Once a special issue has been chosen by the EIC, the guest editor is responsible for ensuring that authors submit their papers.
- Each article will be reviewed separately. Being submitted to the special issue/section **does not** guarantee publication. The Editor in Chief reserves the right to reject papers from special issues if the reviews do not recommend publication.
- Each article will be peer reviewed and peer-review will be overseen by the EIC and Associate Editors, with input from the guest editor. Guest editors may not review submissions to their own issue, even if they have served as reviewers in the past.
- Individual authors will be notified of their status (accept, reject, revise and resubmit) and provided with rationale and reviews. The guest editor will be notified, but the reviews will not be provided.

***ScholarOne Submissions and Peer Review***

Your main contact will be the EIC, Brandy Schillace, [brandy@bschillace.com](mailto:brandy@bschillace.com)

- Ensure that authors submit via ScholarOne. Explain that, though you are guest editor, it is their responsibility to submit their work using the journal's online submission interface. Submissions must be sent using the 'Special Issue' tag in ScholarOne. When authors submit their work, they will be prompted to indicate whether their paper is for a special issue. They should use the drop down menu to find the tag.
- Ensure solicited papers are submitted on time as outlined in the submission schedule (to be determined), this is to allow enough time for peer review/revisions and production.

- Update Editor-in-Chief and production team of any known or anticipated delays in article delivery.

### **Notes on Production**

Your main contact email address for Production issues is the Production Editor, [production.mh@bmj.com](mailto:production.mh@bmj.com), though most queries should first be directed to the EIC.

- Ensure authors receive guidelines about BMJ's house style and adhere to these in submission of their work. Note that our references style is Chicago Author Date.
- Articles are usually published online as soon as they have completed production process.
- Articles in the special issue can also be grouped together in an online 'topic collection'.

### **Promotion**

You will be contacted by the EIC in advance of the issue's appearance. All authors are encouraged to provide a lay summary of the piece, as well as photo and bio. They are encouraged to provide a short 2-min audio if they choose talking about why the piece is important to them. All of these will be hosted on the blog as a means of further supporting the issue. Other possibilities:

- Recording a podcast with editor-in-chief is highly recommended
- Issuing a press release, promoting the special issue through social media and/or contacting key special interest groups.
- Encouraging contributing authors to suggest ideas and share their contacts/expertise if relevant.

### **Timescales**

The time for review and revision vary significantly. For fast-tracked SI, we will be seeking additional suggested reviewers for each piece to fight reviewer attrition. For P2P SI, prepare to submit the articles a full year prior to their appearance in print.

### **\*Additional Notes for Path to Publication:**

For P2P, Guest editors will work closely with Brandy Schillace, Editor in Chief. Our pilot will be *Finding Joy in Africa*, 2024. An example of the timeline follows:

- 1) Guest Editors submit a proposal. We, as a team, review and make suggestions for revision. Ex: is accepted in 2021, it will not print until 2023-24.
- 2) Year 1: Guest editors (GE), with guidance about our standards, collect papers and hold an online conference for the participants (I will also take part as EIC). Everyone gets workshop feedback from the GE and returns a second draft by the end of Year 1. The mini conferences will be followed by a meeting between myself and GE as we discuss potential problems and solutions.

- 3) Year 2: One full year before publication, all articles are submitted to the SI. These each get two review and revision cycles within our system. Then the authors receive decision, and the GE write the introduction
- 4) Pre-Production: All authors will have the chance to write a lay summary and a brief audio recording about their work for publication and dissemination on the blog and social media. The blog also will use any artwork, audio, or video content to support. Any authors who were unable to be accepted may still provide content to the blog in support of the issue.