



Medical Humanities

Special Issues

At Medical Humanities, there are two different types of Special Issues (SI) and both are actively encouraged by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC), Dr 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 open a path to publication for those from the Global South and other under-represented populations through supportive collaboration. Below we detail the two types of SI.

1. Traditional (fast-tracked) themed content

A Guest Editor may submit a proposal for a special issue to the EIC after articles have been solicited and abstracts collected for review from the authors. For the traditional, or fast-tracked, themed SI, articles should be:

1. Already drafted or mostly drafted prior to SI proposal
2. Have the possibility of funding for open access (while not every article in the SI may have guaranteed OA funding upon submission, we encourage each to have considered avenues for OA at the point of publication. Traditional SI should have at least 80% of their content OA).

A special issue will contain 12-18 original research articles of 5000-9000 words in length, an introduction, and the option of two commentaries. We will work to get the pieces reviewed swiftly for appearance within an agreed schedule. Previous themes have included: [Transplant Ethics](#), [Psychosomatics](#), [Genetics](#), [Cardiac Care](#), [Hearing Impairment](#), [Pain](#), Reproductive Counselling, Health Policy and Emotion, and [South African Medical Humanities](#).

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

Historically, those in under-funded areas, in vulnerable communities, and in the Global South have been under-represented even in purportedly 'international' 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 EIC) 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 up to two rounds of revisions after peer review. We are seeking Special Issue submissions right now from India, Southeast Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. The Path to Publication is also open, however, to other under-represented and under-funded scholars.



Where all authors are from low or low-middle income countries, and funding for open access is unavailable, articles will be published open access at no cost to the authors.

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

Guidelines and Process for Both SI Types:

Guest Editors 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 abstracts.

- 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 EIC 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 EIC's editorial decision is final .
- 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, Dr Brandy Schillace.

- 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 EIC and editorial office (mh@bmj.com) of any known or anticipated delays in article delivery.

Notes on Production



Your main contact email address for Production issues after an article has been accepted for publication is the Production Editor, 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 reference style](#) is Chicago Author-Date.
- Articles are usually published online as soon as they have completed the production process.
- Articles in the SI can also be grouped together in an online 'topic collection' in advance of the issue's completion.

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 a photo, bio and short two-minute audio recording 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 the EIC 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 the EIC. Our pilot will be *Finding Joy in Africa, 2024*. An example of the timeline follows:

- 1) Guest Editors submit a proposal; *Medical Humanities* editors and Guest Editors, as a team, review and make suggestions for revision. Accepted as a proposal.
- 2) Year 1: Guest Editors (GE), with guidance about our standards, collect papers and hold an online conference for the participants. 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 the EIC 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 up to two review and revision cycles within our system. Then the authors receive a final decision, and the GE write the introduction to the final collection.



- 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.