

# Compare the claim before comparing the number.

A reusable journal-choice record that keeps definitions, populations, reporting periods, article types, and source conditions attached.

31

source-backed observations

21

publisher metric claims

10

submission requirement claims

**Core boundary.** This is a selected evidence ledger, not a complete journal directory, ranking, fit score, acceptance predictor, or submission checklist.

## Use in a lab meeting

Check whether two numbers describe the same event, population, statistic, and period before comparing them.

## Use in author support

Record the exact article type and preserve whether a publisher instruction is a limit, recommendation, example, or procedure.

Version 2026.09.25-evidence4 | Evidence reviewed 2026-09-11 and 2026-09-24 | CC BY 4.0 | No login required

# Six checks before a number becomes useful.

01

## Match the manuscript

Name the journal, exact article type, audience, and contribution model. This ledger does not determine fit.

02

## Match the definition

Keep editorial screening, first decision, reviewed decision, and final acceptance distinct.

03

## Match the population

Identify all submissions, research manuscripts, accepted manuscripts, or an unstated publisher denominator.

04

## Match the period

Separate the reporting period from the date the source was observed.

05

## Match the package rule

Preserve limit, recommendation, example, procedure, and explicit lack of restriction.

06

## Record the unknowns

Leave uncovered journals and fields unresolved. Never substitute an estimate or search snippet.

**Stopping rule.** If the metric definition, population, source, article type, or condition cannot be established, mark the comparison unresolved.

# Three examples with the denominator attached.

These examples show how to read a claim record. They are not a recommendation to submit to the named journal.

## PLOS: Acceptance rate

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Observation | 26% (publisher-reported percentage)                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Population  | Denominator not specified on the metrics page                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Period      | 2025 calendar year                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Definition  | A journal-level percentage, not a forecast for an individual manuscript. Compare only with a compatible article set, period and denominator.                                                                                               |
| Limitation  | PLOS labels timings as medians and rates as average percentages. This page does not define the rate denominator or restrict first decision to externally reviewed submissions. Do not substitute the older 2023 journal-information table. |

## The Journal of Clinical Investigation: Acceptance rate

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Observation | 9.5% (percentage)                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Population  | First submissions: Research, Clinical Research and Public Health, Research Letter, Letter to the Editor                                                                                     |
| Period      | June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026                                                                                                                                                                |
| Definition  | A journal-level percentage, not a forecast for an individual manuscript. Compare only with a compatible article set, period and denominator.                                                |
| Limitation  | Rates divide the manuscripts reviewed or accepted in the year by those submitted in the same year, so numerator and denominator are not the same cohort. Timings are averages, not medians. |

## eLife: Sent for peer review

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Observation | 35% (percentage)                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Population  | Submissions received in 2025                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Period      | 2025 calendar year                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Definition  | The publisher's share of submissions that went to external peer review. It is not an acceptance rate, and its complement is not a desk-rejection rate: transfers, withdrawals and cohort timing are not separated. |
| Limitation  | eLife publishes every reviewed submission as a Reviewed Preprint, so it reports no acceptance rate. The share sent for review is the editors' selection rate.                                                      |

Downloadable metric layers: 4 ledger observations across 2 journals and 17 publisher-reported observations across 6 journals. The web tables and exports retain source URLs and locations.

# Three rules that cannot be flattened into one limit.

Article type and submission stage travel with every observation. Publisher instructions control.

## The BMJ: Main text

|                 |                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Article type    | Research                                                                                                                        |
| Observation     | No fixed word-count limit                                                                                                       |
| Rule strength   | explicitly unrestricted                                                                                                         |
| Condition       | Reported main-text count excludes abstract, references, tables, boxes and figures. Methods are not excluded by this definition. |
| Source location | Research: Word count and style                                                                                                  |

## PLOS Medicine: Abstract

|                 |                                                            |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Article type    | Research Article                                           |
| Observation     | 300 words preferred; maximum 500                           |
| Rule strength   | conditional limit                                          |
| Condition       | Structured: Background; Methods and Findings; Conclusions. |
| Source location | Abstract                                                   |

## PLOS ONE: Main text

|                 |                                                                    |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Article type    | Research Article                                                   |
| Observation     | No word-count restriction                                          |
| Rule strength   | explicitly unrestricted                                            |
| Condition       | Concise presentation is encouraged; abstract has a separate limit. |
| Source location | Style and Format: Length                                           |

Downloadable layer: 10 observations across 3 journals. Missing fields are coverage gaps, not permission to ignore a requirement.

# Document the comparison and its limits.

JOURNAL, ARTICLE TYPE, AND SOURCE CHECK DATE

MANUSCRIPT AUDIENCE AND CONTRIBUTION, IN ONE SENTENCE

METRIC DEFINITION, POPULATION, STATISTIC, AND REPORTING PERIOD

PACKAGE RULE, STRENGTH, COUNTING CONDITION, AND SUBMISSION STAGE

COVERAGE GAPS AND UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS

DECISION OWNER, NEXT ACTION, AND RECHECK DATE

## Source record

**PLOS: 2025 publication metrics.** Journal and article-level metrics; named journal panel and footnote. <https://plos.org/metrics/>

**PLOS: publication metrics (2025).** Journal and article-level metrics; named journal panel and the footnote under the panels. <https://plos.org/metrics/>

**The Journal of Clinical Investigation: journal metrics.** Submission, Review, and Decisions: 'Review and accept rates' and 'Time to 1st decision, acceptance, and publication' tables, JCI row, with the table notes. <https://www.jci.org/kiosks/journal-stats>

**JCI Insight: journal metrics.** Submission, Review, and Decisions: 'Review and accept rates' and 'Time to 1st decision, acceptance, and publication' tables, JCI Insight row, with the table notes. <https://insight.jci.org/kiosks/journal-stats>

**eLife: The eLife Model, three-year update.** 'Impact on submissions' paragraph and the speed paragraphs that follow. <https://elifesciences.org/inside-elife/7da92a51/the-elife-model-three-year-update>

**AAI News: Inside the Publishing Process at the AAI Journals.** 'The initial decision' section. <https://news.aai.org/2026/02/10/inside-the-publishing-process/>

Canonical record: <https://manusights.com/resources/journal-intelligence>. The downloadable requirement layer links 3 publisher sources row by row. Original Manusights compilation and blank worksheet: CC BY 4.0. Third-party material retains its original terms.