Pub Med Central - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) by NIH Investigators

1) What format should I use?

Increasingly, NIH will be insisting that PMC status appear in each citation of a peer reviewed journal article. So, eventually, citations for every paper published in 2008 or later should end with one of the following character strings:

a) PMCID: PMCxxxxxxx (Where xxxxxxx is assigned by PubMed Central)

b) "Not a peer reviewed journal article" or "Accepted before April 7, 2008", to indicate why the paper is exempt.

In cases where the paper has recently been accepted, and PMCID# is not yet available, you have two alternatives (each of these should be replaced by the permanent PMCID# as soon as it is available):

c) "PMCID: PMC Journal - In Process" (To cite papers, from acceptance for publication to 3 months post publication, if the journal is listed on http://publicaccess.nih.gov/submit_process_journals.htm) or the PI provides assurance that the journal uses "Method B."

d) "NIHMSID: NIHMSxxxxxx" (To cite papers submitted by the author or by journals not on the above URL, where it is < 3 months from publication date, where xxxxxx is assigned by the NIHMS system)

2) Why isn't a PMID # sufficient for compliance?

Providing a PMID number does not satisfy Public Access policy for citing peer reviewed journal articles supported by your grant. PubMed-ID (PMID) numbers indicate only that the abstract is in PubMed. PubMed Central-ID (PMCID) numbers indicate that the full-article has been made available in the PubMed Central database by the journal or the author.

NOTE: We ask that you _not_ include the PMID# in the citation, as it is not relevant to the Public Access policy, and actually confuses the issue.

3) Why is my NIHMSID # not enough?

NIH has issued an update to the policy relating to NIH Manuscript Submission Reference Number NIHMSID#s: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-136.html Effective August 21, 2009, an NIHMSID (or PMC Journal - In Process, if applicable) may be used to indicate compliance with the Public Access Policy for up to three months after a paper is published.   After that period, a PMCID must be provided in order to indicate

compliance.   Specifically: If an applicable paper was published three or more months before an NIH application, proposal or report is submitted, the awardee must include a PubMed Central Reference number (PMCID) at the end of the full citation for the paper. An NIHMSID#/In Process notation is not acceptable in this case.

4) I thought my publisher took care of this, what do I do?

It is the awardee's responsibility to demonstrate compliance with the Public Access Policy. In cases in which a publisher of a journal not on the URL listed above handles submissions to PMC, then during the time period between journal acceptance and posting on PMC, the publisher should provide you with an NIHMS number so that you can demonstrate compliance with the policy. The NIH PubMed Central system immediately issues a NIHMSID and allows up to a 12-month delay before public release, so delays between publication and posting on PubMed Central do not obviate the need for an NIHMSID number.

You should prompt the journal to send you the NIHMSID number or a clear statement confirming that it uses "Method B." You will need to cite the article using this number (or PMC Journal - Method B) until a PMCID number is available. You may need to remind the journal that the NIHMSID number is required as soon as the article is accepted for publication and that the system allows them to stipulate a delay before the text is made public. NIH does not recognize agreements for delays between publication and posting on Pub Med Central as the terms of grant awards clearly stipulate the policy.

5) Don't I have 12 months after publication to submit the article to PubMed Central?

No, submission must be done as soon as the article is accepted for publication. The NIH Public Access Policy implements Division G, Title II, Section 218 of PL 110-161 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008).

The law states:
The Director of the National Institutes of Health shall require that all investigators funded by the NIH submit or have submitted for them to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central an electronic version of their final, peer-reviewed manuscripts upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication: Provided, That the NIH shall implement the public access policy in a manner consistent with copyright law.

The term, "12 months", refers only to public availability on PubMed Central. Such delays in making public the PubMed version of the article may be arranged by agreement between a journal and PubMed Central. Submission of the article to the NIHMS system always must be done at the time that the article is accepted for publication.

6) How do we get a PMCID # or NIHMSID #?

The manuscript should be submitted, either by the journal or by the author, to PubMed Central through the NIHMS URL at: http://www.nihms.nih.gov/db/sub.cgi

The following web site is useful in obtaining NIHMSID numbers or PMCID numbers if the PMID number is known: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/pmctopmid

7) I think that paper is already in PMC, how do I find out the PMCID #?

One way is to check in PubMed. **Look at the lower right below your abstract for the PMCID #**

(NOT the lower left, which is a PMID # and applies only to the abstract itself).

There is also an **on-line tool** that allows you to enter a PMID to obtain a PMCID or NIHMSID http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/pmctopmid.

The terms of your award stipulate that you must provide this documentation; NIH staff cannot research the citation status in each of the many hundreds of applications received.