

The MISEV renewal process: building MISEV2018

The process of renewing the 2014 MISEV guidelines ("MISEV2014," (1)), which had been written by the 2012-2014 ISEV board members, began with discussions of the ISEV Board of Directors (BoD) throughout 2016. An ISEV membership survey was released to all ISEV members in October of 2016, asking for feedback on the MISEV2014 document, its utility for EV research, the need to update it, and the preferred options for producing an updated version. The results of the 2016 survey were reviewed at the ISEV BoD strategic planning meeting in San Diego, California, in late 2016. They were also described in an editorial in JEV that was published in 2017 (2). Amongst a variety of valuable input, a near-unanimous position of the membership was that broad involvement of the community in guideline updates would be desirable.

The ISEV BoD discussed the update again at their strategic planning meeting in Birmingham, UK, in December, 2017. As decided at that meeting, a draft of the new guidelines (called "MISEV2018" since the target was a 2018 publication date) was prepared by the corresponding authors with consultation by others in the first months of 2018. This draft was distributed to the ISEV BoD and JEV editors-in-chief, who provided feedback. The corresponding authors then revised the draft in March 2018, followed by some additional feedback and revisions, which were completed by mid-April, 2018.

The corresponding authors, with input from the BoD, prepared and revised a detailed online author survey to gather feedback on the MISEV2018 draft from ISEV members. The survey had 61 questions, most of them mandatory. Some questions were multiple-choice. Many featured text boxes for more extensive feedback.

On March 13, 2018, a notification was sent to the entire ISEV email list, informing the community of the upcoming opportunity for participation in the guideline renewal effort. This notification was also posted publicly on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The ISEV mailing list at the time comprised several thousand email addresses, including all current and previous ISEV members who had not opted out of emails. The notification, among other things, described the authorship criteria:

- Completion of a comprehensive survey to build the MISEV2018 draft
- Participation in teleconferences or other forms of feedback as requested and needed
- Review and approval of the final draft of the manuscript
- Current ISEV membership in good standing (see: <https://www.isev.org/page/Membership>)
- Legitimate affiliation with an academic institution, government agency, or nonprofit group or company related to EV research.

This notification was sent to the entire mailing list in order to maximize participation: individuals who were not ISEV members at the time of distribution had an opportunity to join (or rejoin) the society in order to contribute if they so desired.

On April 17, 2018, the MISEV2018 draft and a link to the BoD-approved MISEV2018 SurveyMonkey survey were sent to all ISEV members (including those whose memberships had expired at the end of 2017) by email. Although sent through the SurveyMonkey system, the sending address was changed from the default ISEV administrator email address to the institutional email address of corresponding author Kenneth W. Witwer (Johns Hopkins University) in an attempt to avoid spam filters and encourage responsiveness. A deadline of May 11, 2018, was set for responses. Multiple reminder emails were sent prior to the deadline.

Considering that some EV experts in the ISEV community may still have missed the emails or other alerts, several alternative outreach strategies were pursued.

1) At the ISEV2018 annual meeting in May, 2018, the MISEV2018 effort was advertised prominently throughout the meeting, from announcements in plenary sessions to personal outreach of the ISEV BoD and JEV editors.

2) The corresponding authors reached out personally several times to individual ISEV members who had opted out of SurveyMonkey emails (the SurveyMonkey system records "bounce-back" emails).

3) Social media sites were used regularly by the corresponding authors and others to inform and remind the community of the effort.

4) Despite the stated requirement that authors must be ISEV members, it was recognized that numerous valued community members might have had lapsed memberships but still be contributors to ISEV-allied efforts as members of related societies, such as, but not limited to, the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH), the International Society for the Advancement of Cytometry (ISAC), and the International Society for Gene and Cell Therapy (ISCT). Therefore, advice from ISEV BoD members and others was gathered to build a targeted outreach effort to prominent members of these overlapping communities.

In addition, to maximize participation in this initial feedback phase, several strategies were pursued.

1) To maximize participation by survey visitors, multiple personalized reminders were sent from corresponding author email addresses to:

a) individuals who began the authorship survey but did not complete it;

b) individuals who began or completed the authorship survey but indicated that they did not wish to accept authorship (in several cases, they had declined authorship mistakenly).

2) The survey was also held open for almost a week after the May 11, 2018 deadline (although this was not generally advertised).

3) Personal communications, such as annotated pdfs and email communications, although discouraged, were accepted in certain cases.

4) Concerned that individuals in some geographical areas seemed to be underrepresented, ISEV representatives reached out to individuals in those regions to confirm that they had received the emails or notifications (they had, at least in the tested cases).

From late May to late July, 2018, a comprehensive revision was undertaken.

All survey comments (including those from the minority of contributors who declined authorship) were compiled in a spreadsheet. All extra-survey comments (in documents or emails or other personal comments submitted to the corresponding authors) were also compiled by the corresponding authors. Finally, a document was prepared with all comments sorted into different categories. This document guided revisions, with multiple rounds of edits and comments. Where necessary, contributors were contacted for clarifications and additional details.

Non-responding ISEV members and other members of the community were contacted in July, 2018, to request further assistance (to be submitted by August 3, 2018).

The corresponding authors and others advertised the effort at multiple scientific meetings from June to August, 2018, both in presentations and in personal outreach.

A unified, collaborative, semi-final revision based on all comments received by early August, 2018, was prepared, checked by ISEV BoD and JEV editors, and sent to the accumulated list of contributors on August 21, 2018. This version included author names and affiliations.

Responses to this final version were invited via a new survey for all authors to confirm authorship, name and affiliation(s). Comment boxes were also provided for further requests. Responses to confirm or decline authorship were requested by September 7, 2018.

In parallel, a final outreach to previously non-responding community members was conducted. These included respondents to the preparatory 2016 survey who may not have renewed their memberships in 2017 or 2018.

At the same time, all authorship recommendations and requests were reviewed by the corresponding authors, with outreach as needed. Three reports were received of authors who thought that they had completed the survey, but for whom no data were recorded. It remains unclear how this happened, but it is possible that the same device (not just the same IP address) was used by more than one author, and that the final response over-wrote the original. Details for all of these authors were captured.

For authors who did not respond to the final authorship confirmation by the deadline, blind-copied bulk emails were first sent by the corresponding authors. Then, individual emails were sent. Finally, with only a few non-respondents, personal appeals were sent via an alternative email address. These efforts culminated in confirmation of authorship for all 382 author-level contributors.

All final, minor comments from the authorship confirmation survey were compiled and considered for minor revisions. A final manuscript, incorporating all name and affiliation adjustments, was submitted to JEV on 20 September, 2018. By decision of the ISEV BoD and JEV Editors-in-Chief, the final document was not sent for further peer review, as procurement of qualified and unbiased editors beyond the 382 authors was thought to be challenging and unlikely to yield major adjustments. The MISEV2018 document was accepted for publication on 25 September, 2018.

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References

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