




Role of the Manuscript Reviewer

Peer Review

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 a place of mind
 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

 Vancouver

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Peer Review

- Used by most journals
- Viewed as an important component of journal quality & reputation
- Usually [but not always] blinded (reviewers unaware of author / authors unaware of reviewers)

Peer Review

- Evaluation of manuscripts by those knowledgeable in the same discipline
- Needs to be:
 - Critical
 - Unbiased
 - Constructive

Peer Review

- Assists Editor in determining what is to be accepted for publication
- Aids in determinations of
 - Quality of the manuscript
 - Novelty / Originality
 - Value to the Readership / Journal

Why should an Author know about the Review Process?

- Crucial to preparing the manuscript
- Should allow you to anticipate how a reviewer will interpret view your paper
- Avoid misunderstanding
- Correct deficiencies before submission

Reviewers

- Usually 2 -3 reviewer solicited per manuscript
- Selected for bank of reviewers
- Reviewers are volunteers
- Fixed period of time allotted for review to be submitted

Characteristics of a Reviewer

- Expert in the field
- Unbiased
 - Avoid conflict of interest
 - Ideally blinded (unaware of author / institution)

Characteristics of a Reviewer

- Treat author with respect, fairness and politeness
 - Do not be a discouragement !
- Confidentiality
 - Data should not be discussed or reproduced
 - Should not be used for private gain
 - Should not be suppressed to further interests of reviewer
 - Anonymity to be respected

Job of a Reviewer

- Responsible for
 - Timely review
 - Protect integrity of Journal & discipline avoid publication of poor / faulty data
 - Welfare of subjects
 - Unethical / illegal treatment or behaviour

Systematic Review

- Each section reviewed independently
 - Points out things that are missing or in the wrong section
 - redundancy
- Looks for
 - Contradictions
 - Missing references / citation of relevant work
 - Clarity of tables, graphs and illustrations

Job of a Reviewer

- See what the authors have not seen
- You are not merely to decide if your journal should accept or reject
- Seek to improve the manuscript even if you think your journal should not publish it

Job of a Reviewer

- Need to know
 - Mandate of the Journal
 - Types of manuscripts published
 - Journal style and general requirements for manuscript submission

What the Reviewer Looks For General

- The topic fits in with what the Journal publishes
- Will the readership have an interest in the topic?
- Does the author have a clear message to transmit?
- Is the topic original or redundant (or worse plagiarized)

What the Reviewer Looks For Strengths

- Is the paper correctly / logically structured?
- Is there a clear application or value to the paper?
- Is the methodology clear? Sound?
- Is the paper easy to read?

What the Reviewer Looks For Weaknesses

- No clear point or value ...
 - Is the subject of the paper of any importance?
 - Are we any better off in our understanding of the subject after having read this paper?
- Defective, vague or unclear methodology
- Lack of clarity or focus What is the point? Inability to follow the discussion....
- Poor command of language

What the Reviewer Looks For Weaknesses

- Reviewer needs to point out how (if possible) these weaknesses can be corrected / addressed by the authors

Main reasons for Reviewers Recommending Rejection

- Poor statistics
- Over or incorrect interpretation of results
- Poor or suboptimal description of methods
- Biased, poorly chosen or small study population
- Text hard to follow
- Purpose unclear

Bordage G, Academic Medicine 2001;76:889-896