

Peer Review Initiatives in Nepal

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Peer review forms the foundation of scientific consensus building and communication. Scientific journalism globally has a long history however peer review was officially discussed only near the millennium in the first conference held in Chicago where it was felt that new innovation and practices needed to be shared among the scholars in a global forum.¹ Peer review process has shaped with time according to the author quality, the culture of peer review practices and the editorial policy prevalent in the community.^{1,2} The process of peer review has also found its own shape in context of Nepal as scientific publications number increased, academic requirement for budding institutions started to rise and Nepali scholars started participating in global forums. In Nepal, peer review forms the foundation of scientific sharing and consensus building in areas of journal editing, ethical reviewing, thesis writing in the academies and universities, and funding allocation by various organizations. Lots of developments has happened globally in the peer reviewing in last one decade with advocacy for more transparency, use of blinding technique for bias reductions, improving peer review performance with use of checklist, data sharing, innovative ideas for upgrading the quality of peer reviewer by training and ideas for providing recognition.³ Post publications peer reviewing has evolved as a basis of check science by global leaders of research. Realization of peer review science as a gatekeeper and advocate for pure science has still not been realized by scientific communities of Nepal, most probably due to lack of discussion, advocacy and initiatives. Nepal Health Research Council along with its Journal for Nepal Health Research Council(JNHRC) editorial team takes initiatives and lead in this regard to discuss the local peer review related issues and share its experience at national level with various stakeholders' organization in its first workshop of its kind "Peer review in Nepal". The idea is to improve the academic environment from mere publication counting culture for academic post achievement⁴ to quality publication and sharing of challenges and ways to counteract it in our own way with inputs of some global experience. It also builds more responsibility among peer reviewers, understand their role during the academic process,

allows sharing and bonding among the editorial and its reviewers. It breaks the dogma that peer review is a not only a prepublication affair rather a holistic process of academia from conception of research idea to discussion all the way after publications.² This will also advocate for academic recognition on behalf of reviewer in areas of providing academic credits and recognition among the stakeholders. Journal of Nepal Health Research Council takes initiatives to develop the culture of providing certificates to peer reviewers, constantly improve and regulate the pool of quality reviewers, provide training and guidance and lobby for academic credit points in national councils through ideas sharing. The expectations are obviously to develop the clean scientific culture among the scientists of Nepal for future. It sets the benchmark for high quality peer review policy and foster environment to maintain highest standard of research integrity in Nepal.

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