

Peer Review: The “next step” for a new journal.

Pradhan RL

The goals of peer review are to assist the editors in forming a decision concerning publication of a manuscript and to provide constructive feedback to authors in order to enhance the quality of the final written product.¹

The peer review process not only provides a ‘third persons’ view on the article but definitely improves the presentation of the article and also save later embarrassment for an untidy publication.²

Like any skill, the art of reviewing manuscripts is one that improves with practice for which no formal training is available. It is not taught during postgraduate medical education. Attentive peer review is a gift for authors, editors, journal as well for the subject. As an editor, we and all other editors are always looking out for good reviewers who would help us in quality control and process efficiency.³

Once a manuscript reaches the hand of an editor, it is triaged at first instance by most of the editors.¹ The manuscripts that do not following the instructions to authors or do not have conclusions derived from methodologically sound study or do not have a clear research issue are sent back to the authors.

Every journal has its own protocol for performing the peer-review process. Generally, based on the opinions of at least two reviewers, the editor takes a decision. If both the reviews are contradictory to each other in their opinion, then a third reviewer is invited. If the reviewer is able to review the manuscript in the specified time frame, does not have any conflict of interest, and if he considers himself to be right person of doing the review, he should accept to review the manuscript.

The reviewers should evaluate on the following technical and ethical issues such as scientific quality of work in terms of proper methodology, presentation of the manuscript and ethical concern.

The reviewer when submitting the comments to author should include specific comments on the desired presentation of data, results and discussion and state whether the article is good enough to be published, returned to the authors or rejected with definite reason or appropriate citation. The reviewer should provide an honest and critical assessment of the manuscript and comments on strength and weakness of the manuscript and may suggest what future work on the subject would improve the quality of manuscript. The peer review, traditionally, has been a double blind process where the authors and reviewers do not know each others’ identity. With most journals, the reviewer neither obtains remuneration and nor any other direct benefit. They do it for the sense of duty, selflessness and a desire to contribute in an important way to maintain the high standard and veracity in their respective areas of research.³

It is an honour and privilege to be selected as a reviewer and to have an opportunity to work cooperatively and constructively as teacher or mentor to the author.³

NOAJ is a new journal and we need to set a certain standard in publishing genuine scientific articles from the beginning. It is not that we lack materials but need to focus more on putting our clinical work on paper and start publishing.

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3. Benos DJ, Kirk KL, Hall JE. How to review a paper. *Adv Physiol Educ* 2003;27:47-52.