The Peer Review/Editing Process

Adapted from a presentation by Elsevier Hong Kong
Peer-review Process

When a paper arrives at a journal’s editorial office a few things can happen:

A. Editor reviews paper herself/himself

B. Editor assigns to Associate Editor

C. Editor or AE assigns to Peer Reviewers
Peer-review Process

What to look for

1. Appropriateness for the journal
   • Is the topic relevant to the journal?
   • Is the topic timely?
   • Is the topic significant?
   • Is the study unique? If so, How?
Peer-review Process

What to look for

2. What type of paper/research is it?
   • If research, how is it structured?
     – Randomized, controlled, blinded Meta-analysis?
     – Retrospective?
     – Case series or single case
Editors and Peer-review Process

Editors/Peer Reviewers look for:

Did the author follow the instructions of the journal?

- Correct Number of Authors?
- Conflict of Interest/Disclosure Statement?
- Copyright release signed?
- Informed consent (if applicable)/Ethics considerations
Peer-review Process

Did the author follow the Instructions of the journal?

• Is the article format correct?
  – Structured abstract?
  – Correct article format (Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, Refs?)
  – Are References in correct format?
Peer-review Process

Peer Reviewers look for:

Are the technical aspects correct?

• **Research Structure:**
  – Correctly described and performed?

• **Statistics:**
  – Correct analysis?
  – Accurate interpretation?
  – Clear presentation?
Peer-review Process

Editors/Peer Reviewers look for:

Technical aspects, continued

**Tables and Figures:**

- Accurate and clear structure, presentation, and presentation?
- Do the numbers add up?
- Are the data consistent with the body of the paper?
Editors/Peer Reviewers look for:

Technical aspects, continued

Tables and Figures:

• Abstract & Body of paper
  – Do number of patients, other data match?
  – Conclusions consistent?
Peer-review Process

REJECTION:

Most journals accept 30% or less (NEJM, BMJ accept ~ 10%)
What are the benefits of peer review for an author?

• It helps to alert you to any errors or gaps in literature you may have overlooked.
• It can assist with making the paper more applicable to the journal readership.
• It may enable a discussion (between the author, reviewers, and editor) around a research field or topic.
• You can receive detailed feedback from experts in the field.
What should you expect during peer review?

- The editor may reject your paper outright if it does not adequately fit the scope of the journal.
- If suitable, your paper will be sent to reviewers.
- The reviewers will provide comments and suggestions for revision and make a recommendation to the editor.
The editor then makes a decision and tells you what the decision is.

The decision could be:
- Accept in its present form,
- Accept with minor revisions,
- Request major revisions,
- Reject,
- Reject with the option to resubmit a new version.

You then choose whether to revise the paper and resubmit.
How long does the review process take?

• The reviewers are academics or professionals working in the field and also write papers themselves.
• They offer their time and their expertise voluntarily in order to assist with the improvement of papers and to encourage new research in their topic of interest.
What are the benefits of online submission?

- Online submissions are automatically acknowledged.
- Authors can easily check the status of their submission during review.
- Papers are easier to track, amend, and update.
- It is a simple method of sharing documents and sending communications throughout the review process.
- Electronic submissions can also be edited more easily.
Things to remember before submitting

• Check which form of peer review your chosen journal operates and make your paper anonymous if necessary.
• Does your paper contain the name and affiliation of any/all co-authors?
• Have you provided an abstract summarizing the key findings of your submission?
• Are the references in the style required by the journal?
Things to remember

• Are all references made to the literature listed in the "references" section?

• Has any permission for the reproduction of images/figures/tables, etc. been sought?

• Is the paper clear, concise, and accessible to a reader?

• Does the paper length adhere to the journal’s guidelines?