

Editorial

Rigor of Peer Review Process

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Shouldering the responsibility of Editorship of a journal is an arduous task and it was very well done by Harry Van der Zee. As the baton is passed on to me, I feel honoured and believe to take it to new heights.

Beat Spring and Lorraine Taylor started it as a newsletter in 1986 just to remain in contact with the students who had been following George Vithoulkas Seminar in London and it soon metamorphosed into a journal in 1995. It is a forum open to new developments and sharing ideas and idea is from where the research starts.

We are living in an era of vast and ever growing scientific research which needs to be communicated to the fraternity, stake holders and common man and it is achievable through publishing. Apart from scientific research, there is a colossal amount of information on recent and emerging trends in journal publishing which needs to be shared in a practical way. Peer review is one such area. It is an important mechanism to help editors determine whether the work is of good quality, high priority and warrants publication. A good critique provides constructive comments to enhance the quality of journal content. An increasing number of journals are adopting the model of peer review to avoid bias and reviewing scams. There are three types of peer review:

- Single blind: name of reviewers are not revealed to the authors.
- Double blind: names of reviewer and author are not revealed to each other.
- Open: names of authors and reviewer are revealed to each other.

Reviewer selection is critical to publication process and their selection is based on many factors including expertise, publications, records, reputation, peer-reviewing experience and personal knowledge, etc.¹ Many journals obtain consent from reviewers for each other, whereas others give authors the option of recommending preferred/non-preferred reviewers.² Furthermore, studies have found that author-recommended peer reviewers tend to recommend acceptance more often than journal-recommended reviewers.³

Peer reviewers have significant responsibilities toward authors, editors and readers as detailed in the *Council of science editors' white paper on publication ethics*.⁴ They do not make the decision to accept or reject; they recommend a decision. The decision-making authority is with journals editors. While reviewers and editors easily agree on what is clearly not acceptable for publications, deciding what is worthy of publication is a tougher challenge.⁵ Peer reviewers play an important role in identifying misconduct such as data fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, image manipulation, unethical resource biased reporting, authorship abuse, redundant or duplicate publication and undeclared conflict of interest (CoI).⁶ They assess the scientific value of work and the quality of writing and provide a constructive feedback to authors to improve the quality of manuscript. It is common for peer reviewers to give a conflicting feedback, in which case, the manuscript is sent to another reviewer.⁷

With the increasing use of online submission systems, there has been a greater control and transparency in peer review process. To improve this process further, various research reporting guidelines have been developed to assist the author to prepare the manuscript and the reviewer to assess them. For example, the HomCase guidelines developed for reporting homoeopathic case reports include a checklist of 08 items that should be included while reporting a case.⁸ Other research reporting guidelines are available at www.equator.com.

To recognise the contribution of peer reviewers, ORCID, Sense about Science, Wiley and Science Open collaborated to organise the first Peer Review Week in 2015.⁹ The Peer Review Week is a global event celebrating the essential role that peer reviewer plays in maintaining scientific quality.⁸ This event emerged from growing awareness amongst the scholarly publishing community about the enormous contribution made by peer reviewers to every form of scientific communication. This year, the Peer Review Week shall be celebrated from 10 to 15 September with the theme 'Diversity and Inclusion in Peer Review'. Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) has also released updated ethical guidelines for peer review.¹⁰

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We hope to develop a reviewer pool soon and welcome you to the reviewers' panel with your brief biodata, the area of expertise and consent to be on board.

Taking the impetus further, it is aimed to develop the journal with evidence-based case studies and original articles.

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