

One manuscript (cont.) The Other Perspective: Editors and Reviewers

Karl V. Clemons, Ph.D.
Associate Editor, Medical Mycology
California Institute for Medical Research, Santa Clara
Valley Medical Center, & Stanford University

Editors & Reviewers



Roles and Influences

- Who are these “one-eyed hydrocephalics”??
Why do they decide if my stellar science is worthy of publication???

What are the jobs of the Editor and the Reviewers?

“The role of the Editor and Reviewers is to keep the authors from embarrassing themselves.”**

Philosophy of peer reviewed publication told to me by Lowell Young & John Rex at an Antimicrob Agents and Chemother editorial board meeting.

** This may include rejection of the manuscript .

Possible outcomes of Review

- Acceptance – As Is! Very rare, but it can happen!
- Reject - bad paper, poor science, wrong journal, lots of reasons
 - Reject and resubmit – serious deficiencies and new experiments needed
- Revision – Frequency depends on journal
 - Accept
 - Revise again and resubmit
 - Reject

Editorial Process

Submit

- Ms assigned to Editor
- Editor assigns Reviewers (2 to 3)

Review

- Reviewers assess ms
- Comments assessed by Editor

Decide

- Editor decides – Accept, Reject, Revise
- Decision communicated to Authors

Editorial Process after Revision

Resubmit

- Revised Ms returned with response to reviews
- Editor may or may not send back to Reviewers

Review

- Editor & Reviewers assess revised ms and rebuttals
- Comments assessed by Editor

Decide

- Editor makes decision – Accept, Reject, Revise
- Decision communicated to Authors - process may start over.

Pet Peeves of Editors or “Ways to get your Manuscript Rejected”

- Poorly prepared ms. and not following journal style
- Poorly organized ms,
- Poor readability – i.e. spelling and grammar count!



Pet Peeves of Editors or “Ways to get your Manuscript Rejected”

- Poorly prepared figures and tables, lack of legends, labeling and lack of useful information in the legends
- Long winded rambling text not germane to the studies being presented



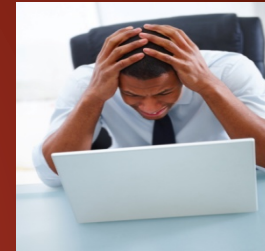
Pet Peeves of Editors or “Ways to get your Manuscript Rejected”

- Telegraphic text - requires reader to guess what was done or what the results were.
- Poorly prepared rebuttal letter not addressing point by point response to review comments – arrogance!



Why did my paper get rejected so fast?

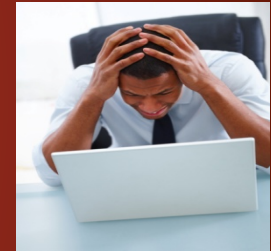
- Incomplete submission
 - No title page, abstract, missing figures, etc.
- Content not within scope of journal (this is a critical aspect in the choice of journal)
- Unreadable English and language!!



Why did my paper get rejected so fast?

– This is the “there may be a good paper in there, but I can’t find it” because I can’t read it!

- Previous publication of same material
- Plagiarism!



Authors



What's my job as a
reviewer?

Reviewers



Who is reviewing my paper?

- “Ideally” - someone with expertise in your area of study on the ms.
- “Ideally” - not someone with a conflict of interest
- “Ideally” - someone that is fair!

Editors request assistance from best possible individuals, and ones that are trusted.

How do you review a paper??

The role of a reviewer

- To decide what is important and what is not so important
- To decline if not within your expertise or you have a conflict or bias.

How do you review a paper??

The role of a reviewer

- To strive to be as fair as possible!
- To review the paper as written & with the experiments done – don't review based on what you would have done, which is not helpful to anyone.

How do you review a paper??

- Read the manuscript carefully, make notes on text – it may take more than one read!
- Decide – Accept, Reject, Revise

How do you review a paper?

- Is a clear, logical story presented ?
 - Like a novel, does it have a beginning a middle and an end?
 - Is it readable -language and grammar again!
- Are sufficient experimental details presented?
- Do the results make sense?
 - Is there duplication - tables & figures?

How do you review a paper??

- Does the Discussion compare and contrast relevant published data with those in the ms?
- Does it provide explanation of the results and a clear statement of conclusion(s)?
- Is the study novel & meaningful to the field?

How do you review a paper??

- Are references appropriate and sufficient?
 - Are key references missing?
 - Are the references in the proper style format?
- What can be shortened, deleted, expanded, better explained?
- Has ms. been carefully prepared?
 - **No = reject, not job of reviewer to rewrite.**
- Has this been previously published, is plagiarism noticeable, self, or otherwise?

A special mention about Statistics!

- Are the statistics used appropriate and meaningful?
 - Parametric vs. nonparametric or just flat wrong statistics used!
- **Don't know – seek assistance.**
 - %'s – not normally distributed need arcsin transforms then stats
 - Means, medians, geometric means, SE, SEM, SD, CI - misuse, abuse, and over use – know what they are and when to use appropriately
 - Statistical power and n values adequate or not?

Preparing the review

- Overall - statements about the paper and its key elements and value.
- **Do not indicate acceptability of ms.**
- Specific issues with the ms.
 - Experimental, presentation of results, reproducibility, clarity of sentences, sometimes simple typos, etc.
- **DON'T BE SLOPPY!**
- Submit recommendation to Editor.

How do you become a good reviewer?

- A focus only on the Methods shows inexperience as to what is most important.
- Many ways to accomplish the same thing, so what are the results and what do those results mean?

How do you become a good reviewer?

- If you don't understand something do background reading and look things up
You may need to read some of the references cited by the authors!
- A good review takes effort and an open mind. Biased reviews can be redacted or not used at all.

How to become a good reviewer?

- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE
- Know the literature in your field older and newer!
- Learn from comments on your own ms.
- Ask for critique by an experienced mentor
 - How do they review a ms?
- Learn from the comments of other reviewers and Editors.

Why be a reviewer?

Give back and accept to do reviews!
Good for career and for field of interest.
Learn from all of this!
Thanks and have fun in science!

Why not be a reviewer for Med Mycol by becoming a
member of the Editorial Board!