

SMRJ Guidelines for Peer Reviewers



Spartan Medical Research Journal

Research at Michigan State University
College of Osteopathic Medicine

Peer review is a critical component of scholarly publishing. Quality peer reviews

provide important feedback regarding the originality, scientific impact, quality, and appropriateness of a manuscript. The chief editor uses peer reviews to make a decision regarding whether to publish a manuscript.

Manuscripts submitted to the *Spartan Medical Research Journal (SMRJ)* are typically sent to 2 to 3 peer reviewers who are knowledgeable in the topic area of the manuscript. *SMRJ* uses a single-blind review system - in other words, the authors are revealed to the reviewers, but the reviewers remain anonymous to the authors. *Reviews must be completed within 10 business days and returned to the Chief Editor.*

SMRJ recommends that peer reviewers take the following steps when reviewing a manuscript:

- If there is a potential conflict of interest (e.g., the author is a student or colleague of yours, or you have acted as an advisor to the project), contact chief editor. In such cases reviewers will normally be expected to recuse themselves.
- Read the manuscript carefully. Often, authors complain that reviewers' critiques give evidence of careless reading. Be objective in evaluating a manuscript and in writing your comments. Avoid acrimony. Test the critique for fairness and objectiveness by asking yourself if you would be willing to sign it and send it directly to the author.
- Do not consider prevailing opinion infallible; you should not recommend rejecting an important paper because its conclusions are not in accord with current scientific or medical orthodoxies.
- Be specific in your comments to the authors. A comment such as "This manuscript is too long" will not be helpful to an author of an excessively long paper. Provide specific directions for eliminating parts or for condensing others. Call attention to verbose or unclear writing.
- Consider each section of the peer review form carefully and provide complete answers to all questions relevant to the manuscript. (Note that the *SMRJ* peer review form was designed for original contributions; therefore, not all sections will be applicable to all submissions.)
- Although you may feel inclined to edit the manuscript, it is more helpful to the *SMRJ* staff if instead you note that there are English problems, and focus on the data, interpretation, and missing information. Keep in mind that *SMRJ* manuscript editors will correct errors in grammar and rhetoric before an accepted manuscript is published.
- The *SMRJ* peer review form includes an area for confidential comments to the editor, such as concerns regarding study fabrication or plagiarism. The author will not receive any comments addressed confidentially to the editor.
- Remember that the manuscript is the property of the author. It is a confidential communication. It may not be used by you or shared with anyone except *SMRJ* editorial staff. If you have a colleague that you believe could provide valuable

feedback, contact the *SMRJ* chief editor and a review request will be sent to that person if appropriate.

- Reviewers must not retain the manuscript for their personal use and should destroy paper copies of manuscripts and associated materials, and delete electronic copies after submitting their reviews.

(Adapted from the ACS Style Guide, 3rd edition)

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