

Editorial

Editorial: The Past and The Future of the Peer Review Process

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The first journal that formalized the peer review process was *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, launched in 1665 by Henry Oldenburg.¹ Since then, reviewers have played a crucial role in the scientific publishing process by serving as gatekeepers ensuring the quality and credibility of published research. They provide valuable feedback and evaluation of the research methods, analysis, and conclusions presented in a manuscript, helping to identify any weaknesses or inaccuracies. In addition, reviewers help to maintain the integrity of the scientific community by upholding ethical standards and ensuring that published research meets the required standards of scientific rigor. Their expertise and critical evaluation is paramount to the advancement of knowledge in the scientific field through the publication of scientific research.

There are several types of review processes in scientific publishing, including:

1. **Open peer review** is a system where authors and reviewer are known to each other throughout the process. It promotes transparency and accountability in the review process.
2. **Single-blind peer review** is a system that the reviewers know the identity of the authors, but the authors will not know the identity of the peer reviewers. It provides a higher chance of the reviewer accepting the review especially if they are referred as the Suggested Reviewer.
3. **Double-blind peer review** is a system that the reviewers are not aware of the identity of the authors and authors are not aware of the identity of the peer reviewers. This type of review minimizes bias and maximizes objectivity.

An effective reviewer should possess the following qualities:

1. Strong expertise in the subject area of the manuscript.
2. Critical mindset to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the research.
3. Provide constructive feedback to authors.
4. Respectful manner when providing feedback.
5. Ethical and unbiased in their evaluation.
6. Maintain confidentiality.
7. Adhere to the timelines for reviewing manuscripts.

Peer review is generally considered a voluntary service within the scientific community. Reviewers may choose to participate in peer review for the intrinsic value of contributing to the scientific process as well as personal and professional enrichment. As such, reviewers have generally provided their expertise to scientific journals for free, with typically no more than a small font acknowledgement on a journal's website or in the back of a journal's annual last issue. Moreover, the current growth of the publishing industry has begun outpacing the readiness of the peer reviewers, causing "reviewer fatigue", further calling into question journals' luxury of free acquisition of reviewers' expertise.

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This rising imbalance is shedding light on the intellectual and time value of reviewers' expertise and the journals' potential responsibility for reimbursement.

It is our opinion at *SurgiColl*, that journals should reward and incentivize reviewers for timely and rigorous reviews. Journals should honor reviewers by acknowledging their valuable contributions to the peer review process through various means such as public recognition, awards, certificates, or compensation. The latter, compensation, can take various forms, such as financial payments, credits towards publication fees, discounts on journal subscriptions, or recognition awards.

Our policy at *SurgiColl* involves a single-blinded review process, where experts in the field collaborate with us and suggested reviewers by authors to evaluate submissions. We require a minimum of two reviews to decide on a submission. In order to encourage a thorough and prompt review

process, we offer financial compensation for comprehensive and rigorous reviews submitted within 10 days of the request. We believe that this incentive will lead to quicker and more detailed peer reviews without significantly increasing publication costs. Furthermore, the compensation is provided regardless of the final decision on acceptance or rejection, ensuring an unbiased review process while still honoring the reviewers time and expertise. With ever increasing number of scientific journals, particularly in the open access arena, now more than ever journals need to respect and reward their reviewers – the pillars of the scientific publishing process.

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