2-Part Webinar Series: Critiquing a Published Article Series
Part II: Becoming a Peer Reviewer for Scientific Writing & Communication

Questions Asked: 31 October 2024

1. I submitted a manuscript to a journal in March 2024, but I haven't received a reviewer report yet. Anytime I send a reminder, I'm told it is under review; how long should I wait?

   Journals are different with regards to review time – but this seems too long. The proper procedure to contact the editor. If the review process is too slow – you may decide to retract the paper and submit to another journal.

2. Sometimes, the analysis can be very strange, even for the editor. Suppose the two reviewers tell you that they couldn't assess the analysis section but suggest publication of the paper. Would the editor make another round of invitations to review the manuscript?

   For analyses, an editor might conclude an additional analytical reviewer. This is often done with such statistical methodology.

3. How does the editor choose the peer-reviewers to review the specific paper to ensure the reviewers have enough knowledge in their field to review the paper? Does the editor choose based on the CV or just randomly?

   Most legitimate journals have a data base of reviewers that identify areas of expertise and publications. These data bases are constantly being updated and include the quality of previous reviews.

4. Nowadays, almost every journal charges US $2000 to 3000 for a research article, and no professor in developing countries can imagine paying such an amount. Research is much more needed in developing countries than in developed countries. Why should one review such a journal that charges such an amount?

   Currently nearly all journals include some type of publication costs. Choosing open access adds to these costs. And these costs can be a major barrier for some authors, as you indicate. One approach would be contact with the editor to see if there are any options. Very important, if you determine a particular journal is the best submission target, do communicate with the editor with the issues.

5. Typically, how many peers review a paper before it is published?

Depends on the journal and also the content of the manuscript. Typically, 2 or three reviewers at a minimum, with others added based on the content and complexities of the methodology.

6. Why do journals sometimes overlook the initial assessment, and the reviewer sees that it does not match its scope?

   This does happen regularly. Hopefully, the editor's comments will help interpret. The responses to the reviewers should include details how the revisions were constructed.

7. Is determining whether the paper falls within the journal's scope the responsibility of the editor or the reviewers?

   This would be the editor's responsibility.

8. Reviewers sometimes face challenges; for instance, editors may make decisions solely based on their judgment despite receiving positive reviewer feedback on the manuscript. Is this possible in this case?

   While journals vary, the editor has the final decisions and recommendations. There is often an appeal process, but communication with the editor is very important.

9. Can one become an editor based on their experience in the field in question but have not published any research following their post-basic qualifications?

   Certainly possible, but most journals will identify editors and associate editors based on expertise and publication experience.

10. Should inappropriate referencing justify recommending major corrections or rejection? Similarly, how is it justified to recommend accepting/rejecting a paper having "too" large/small sample size?

    A comprehensive literature review and citation is a critical component of science manuscripts.

    Sample size is a major consideration for a manuscript with the concerns of Type I and Type II errors.

11. When we are talking about a relevant or/and interesting topic, is it according to the science or the context?

    It would be both content and science – and typically based on the published literature and citations.

12. Once my paper is rejected right away, should I dump all that I wanted to research, or am I allowed to improve it and resubmit if it is relevant to a specific journal?

DEFINITELY – revise, improve AND resubmit. NEVER QUIT!

13. Sometimes, some of the data is not reflected and/or reflected insufficiently in one paper, so a second paper may be needed to describe the details. In this case, is it a duplicate? What does basically duplicate mean?

    The approach should consider "building" on the science and evidence.

14. What happens when a reviewer suggests a method, approach, or study duration that you could adopt in future studies but insists you must adopt it in the study under review?

    This happens frequently. You can explain the situation relative to the scope of the current paper. Sometimes this works and sometimes not. If the paper is rejected – do revise and re-submit to another journal.

15. Please share a list of available reputable journals.

    As indicated, it is critical for authors to assess the credibility of a journal. In addition to mentors, you may also consult a librarian. The journal should be verified as peer-reviewed. You can see the journal's name, then look up their website online. If it is a peer-reviewed journal, they will usually contain a link that goes to a "submissions guideline'' page of some sort.

16. Are there any training programs or courses for the reviewer?

    Many journals have tutorials for reviewers. Also programs like World Hypertension League have developed enduring materials for such.

17. Could the plagiarism check software mistakenly identify the preprints as plagiarism?

    You should always follow-up when using such software, and such situations can be identified.

18. Regarding language proof-writing, could you elaborate on using AI for manuscript proof-writing and the risk of plagiarism? How much AI use would make the manuscript less authentic?

    Currently AI is used for spelling and grammar – but not content of a manuscript.

19. How is the use of AI in the writing of a manuscript being seen?

As previously discussed - When discussing "AI and science manuscripts," it refers to the use of artificial intelligence tools to assist scientists in writing research papers, where AI can help with tasks like generating initial drafts, improving grammar, finding relevant literature, and formatting, but it's crucial to note that AI should not be considered a replacement for human judgment and critical thinking when crafting a scientific manuscript; researchers must carefully review and verify all AI-generated content to ensure accuracy and ethical conduct

20. Please share your thoughts on this feedback from a reviewer, "As far as can be seen, the article is not seen as more than a report containing various analyses of the food products mentioned in any food laboratory. Therefore, it would be appropriate to reject the article as it does not provide a scientific innovation and contribution to the literature."

    This should be seen as an opportunity to revise with an indication of the new aspects of the content and results with significant implications.

21. Was the abstract submission date June 2024 for the upcoming World Hypertension Congress?

    New results are being accepted. Please check the Congress website.

    https://www.whleague.org/about-us/world-hypertension-congress-2025