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Ways to Recognize and Retain Good Reviewers
Detra Davis, MS, Managing Editor, American Academy of Dermatology, Rosemont, IL

Objectives
- Inform Managing Editors how to retain good reviewers;
- Reduce Reviewer fatigue; and
- Acknowledge top reviewers

Purpose
The purpose of the research was to determine if reviewers would review more if they were recognized for their service to my journal.

Background
In 2015, I started a program to recognize our reviewers:
- Send letters of acknowledgement to the reviewer’s Chairperson informing them that their employee was one of the top 30 reviewers for our journal who did the most reviews within one calendar year.
- Send thank you letters to the reviewers informing them they were top reviewers for the journal.
- Send promotional items to the top reviewers.
- Acknowledge the top reviewers if your organization has an award ceremony each year at its annual conference.

Ways to recognize all reviewers:
- Offer CME credit for peer review.
- Publish each reviewer’s name in the journal of the last issue of your publication thanking them for their service each year.
- If it is in your budget, have a reviewer reception at your annual meeting to thank reviewers.
- Thank each reviewer individually by placing the thank you letter on letterhead and sending the letter out via email.
- Give reviewers a short break from reviewing for your journal (30 days or less).
- Display reviewers names on the wall at the annual conference each year thanking them for their service.

To reduce reviewer fatigue:
Consider starting a Peer Review Mentorship Program. We started one in 2014. This program teaches new members of the field how to peer review. Once you have the new members trained they can be added to your reviewer pool.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Conclusion
I took our top 30 reviewers over the past 4 years. Their reviews averaged approximately 10 reviews per year in 2015. After receiving reviewer recognition, our top 30 performing reviewers were averaging 17 reviews per year. In this study, reviewer recognition increased reviewer activity and reviewers looked forward to receiving recognition the following year. The reviewer program was effective.
Adapting to Change: Transitioning an Editorial Office to an Electronic Workflow
Meghan McDevitt, Managing Editor, Rebecca Hammer, Senior Editorial Assistant, Rebecca Lindeman, Senior Editorial Assistant
*The Journal of Pediatrics, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center*

**Objectives**
- Transition the editorial office from a paper-based process to an electronic workflow
- Describe the improvements and outcomes we observed after the transition

**Background**
The editorial office (EO) of *The Journal of Pediatrics* uses Elsevier Editorial System (EES), which has limited functionality for managing a journal’s unique or complicated workflow. Until 2018, a paper-based system in addition to EES was used to track manuscripts through the process, which added considerable time to the EO’s daily tasks, slowed journal turnaround times, and incurred associated costs for office supplies. This inefficiency, along with a desire to increase work flexibility, inspired our goal to transition from a paper-based process to an online process.

**Methods**
We transitioned our workflow over several months, replacing physical files, storage cabinets, and bins with EES in combination with Trello, a free, online collaborative tool. Due to limitations in the functionality of EES, several steps of our workflow are managed outside of the editorial system, which necessitated the addition of Trello’s capabilities to track the progression of manuscripts. We also worked with our Editors to encourage the use of electronic tracked changes rather than handwritten edits.

**Results**
Transitioning from a paper-based to an electronic-based process resulted in several positive improvements. Costs associated with office supplies were cut completely (Figure 1) and due to a reduction in time spent on daily tasks, we saw a noticeable decrease in journal turnaround times (Figure 2). Additionally, the transition resulted in an efficient workflow that allows for flexible work arrangements.

**Discussion**
Adapting to procedural changes is complicated, especially when existing systems have been in place for long periods of time. Staffing changes in the EO required initial shifts toward an electronic workflow, which were met with little resistance. A general comfort level was established, allowing for new changes to be made gradually. It was also important to get input and buy-in from the whole team so that the updated workflow met expectations, addressed issues from the old system, and ultimately provided improved functionality that produced positive results.
Quantitative Objective Measuring Tool for Editor and Reviewer Rigour

Noel McGlinchey, Associate Managing Editor, Content Review, Wiley, Chester, UK
Dr Thomas Gaston, Managing Editor, Content Review, Wiley, Oxford, UK

Objectives
The objective was to develop a tool, free from subjective bias, which could measure and profile editor-reviewer interactions when peer review is happening successfully or at least detect variations in approaches to reviewer selections or decision-making which could indicate changes in peer review rigour.

Hypothesis
Editors and reviewers should disagree. Reviewers with specific expertise may fail to identify critical flaws outside their research area which result in a manuscript being rejected. Editors have greater understanding of their Journal’s scope and standards so that rigorous reviewers must be expected to make recommendations at variance with editor’s decisions. However, reviewers and editors opinions should generally agree because editors’ decisions are largely based on reviewers’ recommendations. Across all decisions they should tend to agree, with a few outliers of stronger disagreement. If frequency of disagreements is plotted this should result in an approximately bell-shaped (Normal) curve. In a study by McGlinchey et al (2019) a mathematical tool was used to demonstrate consistency in reviewer rigour in journals where editorial offices and editors independently selected reviewers. The authors decided to test if this tool could be used more widely.

Method
Editor decisions and reviewer recommendations were given numerical values where 1 = Accept; 2 = Minor Revision; 3 = Major Revision and 4 = Reject as described in detail in McGlinchey et al (2019). Differences between reviewer and editor opinions were then calculated at manuscript level to produce Reviewer Rigour scores with seven grades from -3 to +3. For example where a reviewer recommends Accept but an editor decides Reject then the Reviewer Rigour score would be calculated from 1 – 4 = -3. Score frequency was plotted to compare usual journal trends with Normal distributions to produce curves with a distinctive shape to ‘fingerprint’ editor and reviewer interactions. These curves were also compared with situations where standards of peer review rigour might be expected to change or there were concerns.

Scenario 1 – established reviewers
Fig 1 compares Reviewer Rigour for Journal A with established reviewers. The Normal and Journal Total curves are similar showing strong understanding and agreement between editors and reviewers. However, the greater number of negative scores in the Journal Total curve indicates that editors have a tendency to judge manuscripts more severely than reviewers. Journal A’s Impact Factor is currently increasing so this might be expected because with increasing standards, reviewers’ expectations may be lagging slightly behind editors’.

Scenario 2 – comparing editors
Journal A operates a process where different Editors handle manuscripts in different subject areas. It was noted that one editor’s Acceptance Rate was 61% while another’s was 37%. Subject areas were very different (e.g. rheology vs microbiology) so differences may have been due either to submission quality or variations in editor rigour. A comparison of Reviewer Rigour (Fig 2) revealed strong agreement for both between editors with reviewers and Journal Total. So, variations in Acceptance Rates were not indicative of variations in standards.

Scenario 3 – Open Calls vs Invited Manuscripts
Figure 3 compares a Special Issue with an Open Call for papers on Journal A with one where submissions were pre-screened and then invited. Figure 3 shows a peak which is lower than Journal Total in the Open Call near a Review Rigour score of 0. The lower peak indicates less agreement between Guest Editor and reviewers. The higher level of -3 scores represent a greater number of instances were the reviewer recommended acceptance but the Guest Editor rejected the manuscript. On one level, this is reassuring in that the higher Acceptance Rate (88%) is not caused by lower standards but raises a concern that manuscripts Rejected by the Guest Editor may have been suitable for transfer to a General Issue. For the Invited Call, there were more cases where Reviewer Rigour was +1 to +2 which occurs where reviewer/editor opinions are Reject/Minor Revision or Major Revision/Accept. This indicates a bias towards acceptance with invited manuscripts. The difference may be due to the difference in scope between a Special Issue and a general issue. However, permanent editors need to consider whether accepted manuscripts are within a journal’s scope.

Scenario 4 – new reviewer selection process
In a different journal (B) new editors switched in 2016 from a system allowing a small number of reviewers to select manuscripts they wanted to review (2015) to inviting authors publishing in areas related to the manuscript (2017 & 2019). The new reviewer selection techniques caused a clear and permanent shift in Reviewer Rigour from a peak around 0 in 2015 to a peak around +1 in 2017 maintained into 2019. This indicates that where editors actively seek out the best qualified reviewers more rigorous reviews are returned and this can be maintained over time.

Conclusion
This measurement tool is shown to identify changes and differences in reviewer rigour. It highlights situations where the scope of Special Issues may cause weaker understanding between reviewers and editors (Scenario 3) as well as verifying rigour after major changes in practice (Scenario 4). It has potential to be a powerful Quality Assurance tool for the everyday managing editor with applicability to all editorial offices.

Limitations
The Reviewer Rigour score does not provide a direct measure of peer review rigour but rather compares editor and reviewer preferences and can provide a fingerprint for the variations that are to be expected between reviewer recommendation and editor decisions. The tool does not work at an individual manuscript level but across situations such as individual editor’s workflow, Special Issue submissions or changed journal practices.

Practical Implications
• Identify causes of variations in acceptance rates (e.g. Scenario 3)
• Fingerprint journal’s editor/reviewer agreement (e.g. Scenarios 1 and 4)
• Confirm the quality of editor decision-making (e.g. Scenario 2)
• Confirm the quality of reviewer selections (e.g. Scenario 4)

Reference

www.ISMTE.org
www.ISMTE.org
**Background**

Our journal's policy has been for editorial staff to format all articles, prior to editorial review, to ensure consistency with instructions to authors. However, over the last five years we have seen a 125% increase in submissions and a reject without review rate ~50%. We were therefore wasting editorial staff time (and author’s time) in formatting articles that did not get through editorial review.

**Objectives**

1. Develop a process where the editor-in-chief assesses all papers prior to any formatting to journal standards, and makes a decision to reject without review, or process for further editorial/peer review (we call this “triage”)
2. Investigate whether introducing triage resulted in decreased time taken to send new submissions for peer review
3. Measure time saved for editorial staff and authors in formatting initial submissions
4. Investigate whether we reduced our time to first decision with or without review

**Methods:**

On July 9th 2018 we initiated a triage step into our workflow (see Figure 1 for old and new workflow). All original research manuscripts submitted one year prior to this date (pre triage), and all manuscripts submitted one year after this date (post triage) were analyzed.

**Results**

Table 1: Number of manuscripts submitted before and after the introduction of triage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pre-Triage</th>
<th>Post-Triage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submissions</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting required</td>
<td>373 (50%)</td>
<td>174 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triaged</td>
<td>401 (52%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When authors are asked to make formatting changes to their manuscript this takes on average 3.3 days. Our editorial assistant spends ~20 minutes per article checking formatting. After the introduction of the triage step, our editorial assistant checked 50% fewer manuscripts for formatting thus saving 123 man-hours a year on this task alone.

Figure 2: Unsurprisingly, articles that are triaged are rejected without review faster than those formatted and sent to a sub-editor for assessment (about 0.5 days faster), p < .00001, Mann-Whitney U

**Conclusions**

Introducing a step to allow the Editor-in-Chief to assess all manuscripts for content, prior to editorial staff formatting for conformation to instructions to authors (triage):

- Allowed the faster processing of ~35% of articles that are rejected without review
- Saved editorial office staff time
- Saved authors time and allowed them to submit to another journal faster
- Resulted in faster time to first decision for all manuscripts; though did slightly increase the time to reject without review overall

Time saving and tracking methods could be improved if Editorial Manager introduced a triage workflow within the submission system. Editorial staff could then process all initial submissions within Editorial Manager and not take the triage step outside of the system to email.
EON: Past, Present, and Future

Kristen Overstreet, Senior Partner, Origin Editorial; Deborah Bowman, MFA, ELS, Senior Managing Editor of Clinical Publications, American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy; Meghan McDevitt, Managing Editor, The Journal of Pediatrics; Carolyn Sperry, Editorial Assistant, Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Archives of Rehabilitation Research and Clinical Translation; Stephanie Kinnan, Assistant Managing Editor of Clinical Publications, American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy; Lindsey M. Brownstein, Director of Publications, American Gastroenterological Association

Disclosure Statement: Lindsey Brounstein is a colleague of Brook Simpson, member of the ISMTE Poster Committee. Brook recused herself from judging this poster.

Background and Aims
The Editors of EON have always endeavored to provide a publication that is beneficial and informative to ISMTE members. EON strives to offer quality content highlighting the most up-to-date insights into best practices, ethical issues, new resources, and more. Over the years, we have often asked for feedback from the ISMTE Board and for contributions from ISMTE members. This research project aimed to formally survey the membership about its preferences for EON, to ascertain how well we have done so far in providing the content desired by the membership, and to obtain information that will help guide the current Editors in creating future issues of EON.

Methods
To create this poster, all past and present Editors of EON came together. We identified the main overall subjects that EON articles have covered through the years. We created a poll that was distributed to current ISMTE members to determine what broad subjects they would like to read about and what article lengths they would prefer. The 3-question survey, plus 1 open-ended request (asking responders to share additional comments or suggestions), was sent via a link in 2 blast emails to the ISMTE membership. The survey was hosted on Google Forms, responses were anonymous, and participants could choose more than 1 answer to each question. The anonymized results were downloaded in charts for analysis. Additionally, we used a categorized list of EON articles from 2008 to June 2016 (N = 731 articles), provided by the Education Committee, and searches of the ISMTE website for EON articles from July 2016 to July 2019 (N = 171) to review subjects of past EON articles. For the ISMTE website searches, we used the key words policies, procedures, publishing industry, industry, and ethically, ethical issues, educating yourself, education, technology, artificial intelligence, and technical editing to determine the number of articles previously published on the topic.

Objectives
1) To review and summarize subjects of past EON articles.
2) To survey ISMTE members to learn what subjects they most want EON to cover.
3) To compare and contrast objectives 1 and 2 to learn how well EON has done to date in presenting articles that interest and educate ISMTE members. This will give EON Editors direction moving forward and draw attention to ISMTE’s monthly publication.

Results
Thirty-five responses to the 3-question member survey were received, and we used these data to find out what subjects ISMTE members most want EON to cover.

A large majority of respondents told us they prefer “short, 1-page articles I can read quickly” (n = 31, 89%). The respondents were able to check more than one answer to the question, and 9 (26%) indicated they prefer “long, in-depth articles with a lot of information.” 11 (31%) prefer “articles from well-known people in the industry,” and 14 (40%) prefer to read “articles from other ISMTE members.”

Seventy-one percent (n = 25) said, in general, the length of EON issues is just right, while 23% (n = 8) said they are too long, and 6% (n = 2) said they are too short. Additional comments received included “I’d be happy with a newsletter format with easily digested highlights that I know will provide useful information with little investment of time spent reading”; “I like the idea of a combination of shorter articles and longer, in-depth articles”; and “A job opportunity(ies) page would be helpful.”

Background and Aims

I prefer...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I prefer...</th>
<th>(35 responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short, 1-page articles I can read quickly</td>
<td>26 (74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long, in-depth articles with a lot of information</td>
<td>7 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles from well-known people in the field</td>
<td>8 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles from other ISMTE members</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would like to see more content about...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would like to see more content about...</th>
<th>(35 responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What’s happening in the field</td>
<td>20 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI developments</td>
<td>17 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production processes</td>
<td>11 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and procedures</td>
<td>8 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting journal metrics</td>
<td>6 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical issues</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical editing</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education</td>
<td>3 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experiences from readers</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, EON issues are...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In general, EON issues are...</th>
<th>(35 responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too long</td>
<td>22 (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too short</td>
<td>7 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just right</td>
<td>6 (17%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Based on the information received and reviewed, 7% of the content EON has published was on the topic of what’s happening in the larger publishing industry and 6% was on ethical issues; while the topics of policies and procedures, developments with artificial intelligence, and technical editing were covered 1%, not at all, and 2%, respectively. These topics have not been covered well enough and the editors encourage submissions in these areas. Readers may also like to see more articles on reporting journal metrics (1%) and continuing education opportunities (2%). As the majority of respondents preferred short, 1-page articles, EON editors should review author guidelines and consider modifying them to encourage more articles of this length.

Disclosure Statement: Lindsey Brounstein is a colleague of Brook Simpson, member of the ISMTE Poster Committee. Brook recused herself from judging this poster.

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Training Fellows to Become Proficient Reviewers through Use of Journal Club: A Pilot Project

Lisa Pelzek-Braun, Managing Editor and Charles F. von Gunten, MD, PhD, Editor-in-Chief

Journal of Palliative Medicine – Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

Editorial Office: OhioHealth, Columbus OH

**Objectives**

- Train Palliative Medicine fellows and Pharmacy residents to become proficient in the art of peer review
- Develop additional reviewers in the field of Palliative Medicine that have been trained according to our standards
- Enhance the participation of monthly Fellows’ Journal Club by reviewing blinded submitted/unpublished papers with real-time interactive discussion

**Background**

The field of Palliative Medicine is relatively new, becoming a subspecialty in 2008, and the number of papers submitted to Journal of Palliative Medicine (JPM) has grown considerably in the last 10 years, requiring a larger pool of peer reviewers with expertise in the field. Biomedical journals rely on rigorous internal and external review to ensure the integrity of high-quality, evidence-based publications but peer review training is not part of the medical school or residency curriculum. Additionally, there is no agreement on the level of expertise or experience for peer reviewers.1,2

**Methods**

Monthly Journal Club, a required component of the Palliative Care Fellowship, has been utilized for the past three academic years as a training ground for evaluation of blinded submitted, unpublished manuscripts. Journal Club is headed by the JPM Editor-in-Chief (EIC), who is also director of the fellowship program, and the JPM Managing Editor.

A ‘Classic’ article in palliative medicine is chosen to illustrate both high quality research methods and important results. A manuscript submitted to Journal of Palliative Medicine is also selected by the EIC and Managing Editor. The fellows are deputized by the EIC to assist in peer review of the article. Palliative Fellows and pharmacy residents evaluate, discuss, and debate the merits of the submitted paper. One member of the group writes the critique based on the class discussion. Fellows and pharmacy residents from years 2016-2019 were selected to participate in a survey about their peer review training experience.

**Results**

A nine-question survey was prepared and sent to twenty-five trainees. Questions were designed to determine any previous peer review experience prior to the Journal Club sessions, gauge usefulness of the experience, and determine if the training prepared participants to become independent peer reviewers. Sixteen Palliative Medicine Fellows and three Pharmacy Residents completed the survey. Of the nineteen respondents, six had experience as a peer reviewer prior to the monthly Journal Club sessions. 89.47% (17) strongly agreed that the experience of reviewing/comparing both a “classic” paper and an unpublished paper added to the learning experience and found the real-time interactive discussion helpful. 84.21% (16) strongly agreed their opinion was respected in the group setting and 73.68% (14) felt they had a better understanding of the peer review process after the training. 36.84% (7) strongly agreed that the training received prepared them to independently review biomedical journals while 47.37% (9) would like feedback/mentoring on reviews they have written.

**Conclusions**

- The pilot demonstrated that an educational intervention for peer review within an established education session is viewed as valuable and can be implemented without putting added burden on fellowship training.
- Twenty-five new reviewers, trained according to our standards, were added to our reviewer database.
- Fellowship Directors and faculty could use this approach by requesting a submitted paper to review while working within their own Journal Clubs to evaluate a submitted, unpublished paper as a group.
- While the respondents thought that the training received during the year-long monthly Journal Club sessions prepared them to independently review biomedical journals, a large percent would like to receive additional feedback/mentoring on their reviews.

**References**

2. Callaham ML and Tercier J. The relationship of previous training and experience of journal peer reviewers to subsequent review quality. PLOS Medicine. 1/30/2007: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.0040040
Anniversaries in a Digital Age

Alexander Vaeth, Senior Publications and Digital Media Coordinator, American Gastroenterological Association, Bethesda, MD

Introduction
In 2018, Gastroenterology, the flagship journal of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA), celebrated its 75th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, we decided to explore the past in a more contemporary way.

The previous practices for commemorating a milestone for the AGA journals included a graphical callout on the journal cover and a commentary by the editors. We also made social media posts to highlight the occasion using the graphic or journal cover. However, the world continues to move more and more toward a digital age where social media is becoming the new normal in place of print media or advertising. Today, the population is more inclined to watch a newscast or listen to a podcast in place of reading a newspaper.

Aims
To better promote or celebrate a publication’s anniversary or other milestones using new media:
• Discover a new way to celebrate milestones for your publication
• Develop social media content for dissemination and to engage your readership
• Learn the basics for filming an interview with your editor-in-chief or other peer-review stakeholder

Process
We reached out to our current and several past Editors-in-Chief (EIC) for a video interview about the anniversary and to celebrate the occasion. Then we sat down and asked them a few questions:

What has Gastroenterology meant to you?
How do you think Gastroenterology has impacted the field of GI research and practice?
What makes Gastroenterology stand apart from the other GI journals in the field?
How has Gastroenterology evolved since its debut in 1943?
What was your most favorite aspect as serving as editor-in-chief of Gastroenterology?
What do you think Gastroenterology will look like in another 75 years?

The interviews were filmed in a closed conference room using DSLR cameras, a lavalier/lapel microphone and LED panel video lights. If professional equipment is not available, smart phone cameras are surprisingly effective for collecting good quality video and audio. For best results, try to film in a well- or evenly-lit room that is closed off from any major noise sources.

Results
The videos had a combined total of 5,116 views, 78 likes/comments and 13 shares. Overall, the project was successful as this was unique exposure that the journal and editors would not have had without these videos.

Limitations: As we have not created any other video series in this manner there is currently no data for comparison.

Some journals or editorial offices may feel intimated by a project of this magnitude. However, with filming and editing software knowledge, video interviews of this kind can be created by a single person or small team. Outside production companies can also provide support and services if needed. Reaching out to film students at a local college may provide a low- or no-cost production crew.

Conclusion
The video series created an exciting and innovative way to review the history and development of the journal in the eyes of the EIC. The interviews gave viewers a more personal glimpse into the editors and their experiences, allowing them to see a face and hear a voice instead of just a printed name on a page.

Disclosure
Brook Simpson sits on the ISMTE Poster Committee and, as a contributor on this project, recused herself from judging this poster.