The In's and Out's of Peer Reviewing: perspectives of an editor, reviewer and mentor on career development

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Disclosures

- No financial Disclosures
- Charles Zeanah, MD
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  - Current Joint Editor of the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry
- Stacy Drury, MD/PhD
  - Deputy editor, Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
  - Former John P McDermott Assistant Editor-in-Residence, JAACAP
- Marie “Tonette” Krousel-Wood, MD MPH
  - Former Publications Committee Chair, SSCI
  - PI and Mentor, NIH BIRCWH K12 Career Development Award
  - Associate Provost for the Health Sciences, Tulane University
Minimizing the chances that this is the perception of the authors submitting to your journal

GETTING PEER REVIEW FEEDBACK:

Three perspectives

• Charles Zeanah: Editor perspective
• Stacy Drury: Starting out and progressing as a peer reviewer
• Marie "Tonette" Krousel-Wood: Importance of peer reviewing for promotions, tenure and career development

• Q & A

An editors quest for the best reviewers
Editorship: Recruiting and Retaining Reviewers

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Experience

• Smaller niche journal
• Larger broader journal

"Thank you for letting us consider the enclosed manuscript. Although it has obvious merit, we are sorry to say that it does not meet our present needs."
Process

• Quick read (refs and stats)
• Check authorship
• Check suggested and opposed
• Invite reviewers

Challenges

• Finding reviewers
• Unhelpful reviews
• Reviewer vs. editor enthusiasm
• Conflicts of interest

Finding reviewers

• Computer generated list (including suggested and opposed)
• Editorial board
• References of submission
• Colleagues
• Go to
• Decliner suggestions
Unhelpful reviews

• Short
• Opinionated without depth or explanation
• Evidence of bias
• Criticisms that are not feasible to address
• What to do with these reviews—how much editing can you do when you send it back to the author
• When/if to provide feedback to a particular reviewer who submits unhelpful reviews

Reviewer vs. editor enthusiasm

• Lacking major flaws does not mean acceptance.
  • Incremental contributions
• Potential impact
• Role of reviewers in “special issues” and invited manuscripts

Conflicts of interest

• Identified before review process
• Identified by reviewer during process
• Identified AFTER review received
Experience

• How much attention should/focus on readability, grammar, etc
• How often should a reviewer be reviewing
  • Members of editorial board
  • Ad Hoc reviewers
• When to become a Deputy/Assistant editor (career stage)
  • What is the work load
• When to become an Editor in Chief

Weighing pros and cons of editorship

• Pluses
  • Contribution to the field
  • Reading papers I wouldn’t otherwise
  • Reading excellent critiques
  • Stimulating questions/strategies pertinent to my work

• Minuses
  • Time

Tips

• Personalize
  • Invitation letters
  • Writing outside the portal
  • Noting helpful reviews
• Making tough decisions early
Reviewing articles? But I don’t even write well...

Stacy S Drury, M.D., Ph.D
Tulane University School of Medicine

Experience
- “Here and there” JAACAP
  - Stepping stone to editorial board
  - Reviewer- here & there- editorial board- assistant editor in residence
- Deputy Editor for JAACAP
- Reviewer for multiple other journals

Process
- Why become a reviewer
- How does one become a reviewer
- What is the “training” for peer reviewing
- Who should be a peer reviewer
Why become a reviewer in the first place?

• Improve your writing skills
• Improve your editing skills
• Get access to the current literature in your field
• Be able to see how others view the same paper - insight into the range of reviewer approaches

How to become a reviewer

• Start with a mentor
  - Ask about journals for which they review
  - Ask if a good career time to start
• Co-reviewer
  • Borrow a template" – stick to what you know and your own field
• Look for early career or resident journals affiliated with your field/main journals (JAACAP connect)

Entry paths to reviewer status....

https://wire.ama-assn.org/education/where-publish-top-journals-physicians-training
“training” to be a reviewer

- Carefully reading BOTH the instructions for authors AND guidelines for reviewers
- Reading your own critiques- what was helpful what was not?
- Read through invitation letter for any specifics that were included
- As mentors get students/post docs/residents involved early in the process

Create your own template

- Identify the gap (big or small) paper is filling
- Read methods and results FIRST
- Think about study population, analytic approach and methodological concerns first
- Cited literature- complete? Accurately described?
- Conclusion- does it match with the data? Are limitations adequately identified?

What not to do....

- Review something outside your expertise because you like the person who asked you
- Keep potential conflicts to yourself
- Review every manuscript that you get asked to review
- Be afraid to ask for an extension on a review that you want to do
What not to do….

- Make unconstructive critiques about style/grammar
- Make a lot of negative comments about small specific issues if a global recommendation with a couple of examples can be sufficient
- Provide 25 bullet points for a paper that you think has serious flaws
- Be afraid to ask for other expertise in confidential comments to the editor

Creating constructive reviews

The benefits of peer reviewing: the why, when and how much from a career development perspective

Marie “Tonette” Krousel-Wood, M.D., M.S.P.H
Tulane University School of Medicine
Experience

• Associate Provost for Health Sciences
  Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
  Tulane University

• Career Development
  • PI and Director, NIH K12, BIRCWH
  • Co-Director, T11 Program, NIH CCTS
  • Co-Director, Pilot Grants Program, NIH LACaTS

• Editorial/reviewer experience
  • Former Chair of Publications Committee, SSICB
  • Reviewer >15 peer reviewed journals including JAMA, Hypertension, NEJM, BMJ
  • 2018 Editorial Board, NIH Career Development Awards

Benefits of Peer Review

• Engage in scientific/professional community
  • Quality check
  • Advancing the field
  • Increases understanding of a particular journal’s scope and interests
• Increases opportunities for other roles
  • Can elevate your reputation (both for good and bad)
  • Stepping stone to editorial boards and editorships
  • Pathway to leadership roles in organizations affiliated with a journal or membership
  • Aligns with promotion requirements for “professional service, recognition, reputation”

Tenure Track vs Non-tenure Track

• Know promotion criteria and expectations for your institution
  • Professional Service
  • Scholarly Activity
  • Regional/national Recognition and Reputation

• Tenure track
  • Pathway to deputy editor and/or editor
  • Pathway for membership to key organizations- e.g., ACNP

• Non-tenure track
  • Pathway to being a reviewer make sense?
  • Balance Quality versus Quantity
  • Value of being a reviewer for “newer” journals/open access journals- are they all equal?
Promotion and Tenure

- Early Career – Assistant Professor
  - Lower impact journals are ok
  - Expectation of number of reviews per year lower
  - Carefully consider the number of different journals reviewing for

- Mid-Career – Associate Professor
  - Editorial board member
  - Higher impact factor journals
  - Field of research related
  - Balance the number of journals vs. quality of journals

- Advanced Career – Full Professor
  - Deputy Editor or Editor
  - High Impact Journals

Challenges

- Balance
  - Benefit for career
  - Benefit for own learning
  - Time
  - Ensure that reviewing is “in-line” with research
  - Early Career
    - Match your current research focus, not necessarily “past” experience
  - Mid Career
    - May be broader scope
    - Ideally related to current or potential future research directions

Challenges continued...

- Turning down a request from a well-respected researcher in your field
  - Importance of mentorship
  - Having a “no” person
  - Can be more challenging
    - If request comes from within the school
    - If request from editor of journal where you should/want to publish
What to tell mentees

• Target the journals strategically

• When you say “yes”
  • Set aside designated time each week
  • DO NOT go over that specific time

• When you need to say “no”
  • Practice saying no politely
  • Thank you but
  • Outside my expertise
  • Currently reviewing other article for another journal
  • Submitting a grant
  • And here are some ideas of people that might have expertise

Getting credit for reviews

• Continuing Education Credit
  • CME

• Professional Service Credit
  • Biosketch
  • CV/resume
  • Include “ad hoc” on CV

Conclusions

• Peer review .....