Reviewing and Publishing Workshop: Reviewing the Manuscript

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First glance

Is this manuscript of interest to readers of the journal?

Is there a clear hypothesis or aim?

Are the study and manuscript of good quality?

What does the study add/or is there a clear clinical message?

Get a first impression from the abstract
Referee report

Important message/of interest to the journal’s readers?

- yes
- no
  - reject

Summarise for editor, *should be in Abstract*

Has the study been well conducted?

- yes
- no

Constructive criticism, all sections, inc. discussion

Could it be improved, to publication standard?

- yes
- no

Accept

Minor revision

Major revision

Detailed, constructive criticism
Is there a clear hypothesis/aim?

• This should be stated in the abstract
• Justified in the introduction
• Established before results became known
• Investigated with suitable methods
• Conclusions justified clearly against the results and what is already known about this topic
Is the study of good quality?

• Does it have proper ethical guarantees?
• Has it had peer review (external funding)?
• Are the methods and their reproducibility stated clearly?
• Are the methods suitable for the problem being investigated?
• Are there enough patients/experiments to draw clear conclusions?
Is the study of good quality?

• What has not been written can be just as important as what has been written

  e.g. were patients recruited consecutively, who was excluded, were sealed envelopes transparent, how were incomplete data and follow up treated, have statistical issues been ignored

• Has correct statistical analysis been applied?

• Forget the English language and focus on the facts of the manuscript, the English can be corrected later
Formal guidelines for clinical trials & systematic reviews

- **CONSORT for clinical trials**
  Flow diagram, exclusions, power calculations, concealed random allocation, patients lost to follow up (Ann Intern Med 2001;134:663-94)

- **QUORUM for systematic reviews**
  Inclusion and exclusion criteria, publication bias (Lancet 1999;354:1896-900)
Are the results well presented?

• Is there summary information about the patient or experimental group(s), including length of follow up?
• Are tables and figures clearly labelled?
• Have the correct tests been used to compare outcomes?
• Is there either missing or duplicate information?
• Is the information sufficient to justify the conclusions drawn, or is more information needed?
Is the discussion relevant & focused?

- Is the study discussed against the background of current knowledge?
- Do the references appear correctly cited and accurate?
- Are uncertainties and biases discussed?
- Is there a clear clinical or scientific message?
- Could the discussion (or any other section) be shorter?
Re-read the title & abstract

- Do these convey the content of the manuscript accurately?
Topical literature & duplicate publication

• *If you are reviewing for an Elsevier journal*: Scopus will help you! (You will be able to click straight through to Scopus from our review system, EES).

• *Otherwise* use the resources available to you through your institution’s library to find topical literature & can alert you of possible duplicate publication/plagiarism
Get writing

• You are now ready to write a review of the manuscript

• Write constructive criticisms for revisions

• If you have a conflict of interest, please state this and remember that scientific debate can be enhanced by controversies