

## Golden Rules and Good Practices for Peer Review<sup>1</sup>

### Golden Rules:

1. Editors are responsible for the quality of the journal and assure that what is reported is scientific, ethical, accurate, and relevant to the reader.
2. Peer review must involve assessment by external reviewers.
3. The peer review process must assure confidentiality for authors as well as reviewers.
4. Reviewers advise and make recommendations; editors make the decisions.
5. Everyone involved in the peer-review process must act according to the highest ethical standards.
6. Information obtained in the peer-review process must **not** be used for personal advantage or to discredit others.
7. Suspected or alleged misconduct must **not** be ignored.

### Reviewers:

1. should provide timely reviews that are relevant and provide courteous and constructive feedback to the author(s)
2. should disqualify themselves if they are – for any reason – unable to provide an honest and unbiased review in a timely manner
3. should keep the submission and its contents confidential
4. should report any suspicion of misconduct to the editor
5. should **not** contact others to review the manuscript without the knowledge or permission of the editor
6. should **not** intentionally delay the return of a review
7. should **not** make derogatory or personal comments in their reviews
8. should **not** request that authors include citations of their own works
9. should **not** contact an author directly about a manuscript s/he is reviewing

**Remember:** *JANAC* has at least 3 different editors who are paid to deal with grammar, wording, syntax, and APA formatting problems of each and every accepted manuscript. It is appropriate for reviewers to say, in their review comments to authors, that a manuscript needs copy editing (or even major copy editing) and help with APA formatting, but reviewers are not expected to do this work in detail.

What we need from reviewers is input about the content, veracity, uniqueness, and scientific contribution of the manuscript. Answer these questions:

- 1 - Is this manuscript suitable for publication in *JANAC*?
- 2 - If it has potential for publication, but is not yet ready for publication, what needs to be done to get it up to required standards?
- 3 - How can the author(s) improve the manuscript?

### Authors:

1. should choose the most appropriate journal for their work
2. should submit original work that has been honestly carried out according to rigorous ethical standards
3. must give credit to the work and ideas of others by providing accurate citations and references
4. must declare all sources of funding that supported the work
5. should ensure that their submissions abide by the policies and procedures of the journal and follow all submission and presentation requirements
6. must ensure that their manuscripts do not contain plagiarized materials or anything that is libelous, defamatory, indecent, obscene, or otherwise unlawful, and that nothing infringes the rights of others
7. must review the manuscript carefully prior to submission to assure the highest level of accuracy related to content and citations; **all** authors on a manuscript are equally responsible for this step

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<sup>1</sup> Based on and excerpted from: Hames, I. (2007). *Peer review and manuscript management in scientific journals*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

8. should not allow external sources (especially research sponsors) to influence the analysis or interpretation of the data or the decision about what – and what not – to publish
9. should **not** divide their manuscripts into inappropriately smaller “chunks” in order to increase their lists of publications (this is called salami slicing)
10. should **not** submit the same or very similar manuscripts to several journals at the same time
11. should **not** make exaggerated claims about the novelty or significance of their findings, nor should they misrepresent or enhance their results
12. should **not** make significant changes to a manuscript after it is accepted for publication without the permission of the editor
13. should **not** submit an article rejected by one journal to another journal without first using the initial reviewers’ comments to make appropriate revisions and corrections; submissions to other journals need to conform to the requirements of the new journal and should include a new cover letter
14. when asked for revisions, should consider the reviewers’ comments carefully and make appropriate revisions in a timely manner
15. should **not** feel obliged to make all recommended changes, but should provide reasons as to why requested changes were not made on re-submission; remember: editors and reviewers are human and make mistakes too, point out their errors and misperceptions in a courteous and constructive manner
16. when accepted for publication, should follow all of the journal’s publication and post-publication policies and procedures
17. should make the majority of revisions prior to the final proof stage; should make changes to manuscript proofs that are required to assure accuracy and readability
18. should notify the journal immediately if errors are found in the paper after publication so that appropriate notification can be made to the readers on line and in a subsequent publication
19. should provide information to the editor about how reviewer input was used to revise a reviewed manuscript; this can be done in a number of ways:

- List each of the reviewers suggested changes and follow up with an explanation of how the authors used the input to make a change, for example:

Reviewer 1.

Comment: The authors need to expand the section on the methods used. This is was not clear to this reviewer.

Response: The authors agree and have expanded this section (see page 4)

Reviewer 2.

Comment: “Cytotoxic” is misspelled throughout the manuscript.

Response: We are referring to the enzyme “cytotoxin” and this is the correct spelling.

Reviewer 3.

Comment: I would suggest that the authors refer to the Smith (2008) article in *AJN*, 108(3) on hypertension for a better explanation of the new antihypertensive medications

Response: Thank you – this was a much better reference than the one that we had originally cited.

- Use a table such as the following:

<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Authors’ Response</b>
1	The authors need to expand the section on the methods used. This is was not clear to this reviewer.	The authors agree and have expanded this section (see page 4)
2	“Cytotoxic” is misspelled throughout the manuscript.	We are referring to the enzyme “cytotoxin” and this is the correct spelling.
3	I would suggest that the authors refer to the Smith (2008) article in <i>AJN</i> , 108(3) on hypertension for a better explanation of the new antihypertensive medications	Thank you – this was a much better reference than the one that we had originally cited.