

Review of the Research Articles

The review of the research articles submitted for publication is a vital and critical element in crafting and maintaining quality of the journals. The reviewers play key role in selecting the articles which are useful, relevant to the objectives of the journal and of sound research quality. Two reviews are made mandatory by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan for each article. Out of these two one should be preferably from a foreign country with good research standing. Proper review of the article and feedback to the authors not only go a long way for the quality of the journal but it also helps authors in improving his\her research methodology and writing ability.

Unless there is inner strength and honesty any process and procedure can be made a useless and fruitless activity. This is also true for the Some Journals in Pakistan fulfill the criteria of review on paper only! Many a times, the reviewers are not qualified and some reviewers do sloppy job; they don't bother to read the article thoroughly. There are some hard reasons also; first doctors are too busy in their profession, secondly due to poor set up of the social structure in the developing countries ordinary things become too difficult and do waste lot of time; there are also many wasteful cultural and social activities eating away the precious time and energy.

Quran; the final divine book clearly emphasizes on avoiding such useless activities and states says that the God's purpose of sending messengers and the books was to remove the excessive burden on the shoulders of mankind which it tends to increase itself.

Reviews of the submitted articles require dedicated team. The students at very early stage of life should be trained to think and critically evaluate everything. Do not buy the things on face values. Weekly journal clubs with debate and discussion on quality of the articles in its all facets particularly research methodology will go a long way to produce good reviewers.

We used to hold weekly journal club meetings in our department which not only enhanced their knowledge but also inculcated critical thinking in them. Needless to say, that every medical institution must train its faculty in proper reviewing of the research articles. Regular research meetings should be held where all these things be discussed and new ideas about

research must be brought in and discussed. Every medical journal must have a pool of good reviewers.

The reviewers must unsympathetically evaluate everything in the article from its title to the references. He\she must follow a checklist. Of course, it will consume small amount of his\her time but each article usually teaches something new to the reviewers. The criticism may go a long way to transform a mediocre looking article into a well refined useful research article. And this itself is a valuable contribution to the research and service of the humanity. Some journals pay token money to the reviewers which of course does not compensate for his\her precious time and energy but certainly its worth doing it. It's not necessary that the editor will agree with each and every comment of the reviewer and usually the modified article is not necessarily shown to the reviewers.

The editor has responsibility to select honest, unbiased reviewers with competence to render valuable, wise comments. At times the reviewers have to be bold to reject out rightly the garbage "research" or good but irrelevant research. Sometimes he had to send selected portion of the article to another more competent expert. Most editors work selflessly and spend their good time and energy organizing all this very healthy and progressive activity. Honesty and merit shunning away the nepotism and favoritism will definitely provide the healthy soil.

Addressing various relevant issues "Review Criteria for Research Manuscripts" is jointly published by *Academic Medicine* and the Group on Educational Affairs' Medical Education Scholarship Research and Evaluation Section in USA. I find this book an excellent guide for reviewers. This book is available on internet and it is a useful compendium for any medical journal and its editorial staff. The book gives useful suggestions regarding the review and the reviewers under following chapter headings:

1. Review Process
2. Selection and Qualities of Reviewers
3. Review Forms and Reviewer Comments
4. Publication Decision
5. Manuscript Revision and Final Editing

6. Problem Statement, Conceptual Framework, and Research Question
7. Reference to the Literature and Documentation
8. Relevance
9. Research Design
10. Instrumentation, Data Collection, and Quality Control
11. Population and Sample
12. Data Analysis and Statistics
13. Results: Presentation
14. Results: Reporting Statistical Analyses
15. Results: Reporting Qualitative Findings
16. Discussion and Conclusion: Interpretation
17. Title, Authors, and Abstract
18. Reviewing a Review Manuscript
19. Reviewing Descriptions of Innovations

20. Presentation and Documentation
21. Scientific Conduct
22. Reviewer's Recommendation
23. Reviewer's Etiquette

As great philosopher and poet Iqbal says;

نقش ہیں سب ناتمام خون جگر کے بغیر
نغمہ ہے سودائے خام خون جگر کے بغیر

(All impressions are incomplete without hard, dedicated, focused work & the song is also not matured without these virtues.) Good review and high quality

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